

The Politics of Planning : A Case Study -

THE CHRISTCHURCH MASTER TRANSPORTATION PLAN .

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CHAPTER I

Local Government Reorganisation and Local Authority Coordination in Christchurch.

The process of amalgamation of the suburban local bodies of the Christchurch metropolitan area with the City ended with the incorporation of Sumner into the City in 1945. A brief account of the circumstances in which amalgamation took place up to 1945 offers an instructive commentary on the problem of local government reorganisation. The boroughs of Sydenham, St. Albans and Linwood amalgamated with the City in 1903 because the advantages of doing so were obvious and immediate. There were simply too many functions of common concern which could not successfully be dealt with except by an amalgamated local body. A high pressure water supply and a comprehensive method of sewage disposal were two such functions almost immediately undertaken by the new City Council. A poll of electors in each of the three relatively under-developed boroughs favoured amalgamation by a margin of better than two to one. Between 1903 and 1945 twelve more suburbs joined the City but the bulk of 'essential' reorganisation was completed with the accession of the suburbs of Bromley and Papanui in 1923.¹

The advantages of amalgamation in 1903 were tangible

¹ J. P. Morrison: 'The Evolution of a City' Pp.120-126

and the irrationality of the continuation of such a large number of small territorial local bodies obvious.

Riccarton Borough, sheltering behind the great expanse of Hagley Park and enclosed by the City and the County of Waimari, remained the only completely urban territorial local body outside the City after 1945. By this time the old compelling arguments for, and the conditions favouring, amalgamation, had disappeared. Riccarton certainly felt its identity more acutely as the neighbour of such a large territorial authority. Whatever the causes, amalgamation as a method of resolving the weaknesses of a fragmented local body structure, was a spent force. After 1945 local bodies in the Christchurch area, though poorly coordinated for the service of the metropolitan area were not so poorly coordinated that further reorganisation was imperative.

If this dynamic was gone Central Government failed to provide a new motive force. Central Government responsibility for local government has always been handicapped by the determination of the Local Government lobby (the Municipal and Counties' Associations) to resist wholesale reorganisation schemes. In the post-war period, however, a new and promising approach to the problem was recommended

by the 1944 Select Committee of the House of Representatives appointed to investigate among other things "the general structure of the (local government) system".¹ It found the most recent attempt at reorganisation, the Local Government (Amalgamation Schemes) Bill 1937, unsatisfactory largely for the reason that it gave the Minister power to initiate amalgamation schemes and power to alter the findings of the Bill's proposed Local Government Commission. The Select Committee recommended that "the problem of local government should be taken right outside the controversial sphere and as far as possible vested in an independent body" which would give "continuity of procedure."²

This recommendation led to the passage of the Local Government Commission Act 1946. This Act established the independent judicial body recommended by the 1944 Select Committee. But the Act did not set up a Commission with authority to formulate and impose amalgamation schemes as the Select Committee had intended. The Select Committee envisaged a Commission conducting "exhaustive investigations" and publishing findings which would be based not only on its personal investigations but also on the evidence put forward by interested parties.³ Such impartial invest-

¹ Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives Volume II 1945 1 - 15.

² Ibid p.157

³ Ibid p.158

igations leading to an authoritative recommendation, the Select Committee considered, need not be subject to a poll of electors.

The inclusion of a poll provision in the Local Government Commission Act 1946 very soon crippled the Commission's authority. In 1949 the Commission's Christchurch Metropolitan Scheme failed, partly due to the defeat (by a bare majority of less than one half the 6,000 odd qualified electors in Riccarton) of the proposal for the amalgamation of Riccarton Borough with Christchurch City.¹ This failure and subsequent demonstrations of the Commission's impotence did not satisfy the opponents of the Commission. Criticism by the local body associations induced the Government to replace the 1946 Act with the Local Government Commission Act 1953. This new Commission had no authority to initiate amalgamation or other schemes, but awaited either, requests for assistance from the local bodies or suggestions from the Minister as a result of petitions made to him. The 1961 Local Government Commission Act did more than restore the 1946 balance by returning the Commission's power to initiate enquiries and weighting poll provisions slightly more in favour of the Commission.

¹ Report of the Local Bills Committee of the House of Representatives 1960. p.187

In the period since 1946 when Central Government concern for local government reorganisation has amounted to little more than a willingness to tinker with the powers of the Local Government Commission, new approaches to the problem of reorganisation in metropolitan areas have been made. Most important is the two-tier system recommended by the Secretary for Internal Affairs to the 1959-1960 Local Bills Committee.¹ This approach to reorganisation abandons the aim of amalgamation of territorial local bodies. It seeks instead to remedy the effects of ~~a consequence of~~ the division of a metropolitan area by numbers of territorial bodies - the proliferation of specialist bodies performing a single function for a whole area.

Late in 1964 an informal committee of Christchurch local body members known as the Investigating Committee on Two-tier Local Government, drew up on its own initiative, a bill to set up a Regional Authority for Christchurch. Much of its form and wording was drawn directly from the Auckland Regional Authority Act. However, it was much more restricted than its model for it comprised only four ad hoc authorities - the Regional Planning Authority, the Drainage and Transport Boards and the Metropolitan Milk

¹ Ibid Pp.19 - 20

Board. The Bill was dropped when it was rejected by the Heathcote County Council, the Drainage Board and finally by the City Council. Expectations that it would be supported by the City Council majority, the Citizens' Association acting as a party, proved unfounded.¹

This failure left seventeen major local bodies in the Christchurch area, nine of which are ad hoc authorities. The proliferation of ad hoc or special purpose local bodies has been a major consequence of a relatively inflexible system of territorial local bodies. Once the territorial authorities ceased to be contiguous with communities certain functions which could only be performed rationally and economically for the community as a whole became the responsibility of ad hoc authorities. A comparatively recent addition to the list of community functions performed by single purpose authorities was regional planning. Regional or coordination planning for a complicated local body structure followed close on the establishment of town planning.

Town planning in New Zealand was not given legislative direction until the passing of the Town Planning Act 1926, a piece of legislation which bears a close resemblance to the United Kingdom Housing, Town Planning Act 1919.

¹ Gerard Cheyne: 'Christchurch: The Men Who Rule'
Pp. 148-150.

The Act imposed the obligation of preparing a town planning scheme on all boroughs having a population of not less than 1,000 in 1926.¹ It required these planning schemes to have been completed by 1930.² It established a Town Planning Board headed by the Minister of Internal Affairs to approve the schemes when submitted. Speaking on the Bill at its second reading, Mr. Bollard Minister of Internal Affairs, said that far from weakening the local bodies as some had suggested, the Bill was designed to enhance their powers.³

In 1929, the Town Planning Amendment Bill became law and laid the foundation of planning legislation for a fragmented local body structure. Its major purpose was to extend the scope of the original Act to include more than one local authority in a regional planning Scheme. The general purpose of this regional scheme was stated by the Act to be "the conservation and economic development of the region to which it relates and the co-ordination of all such public improvements, utilities, services, and amenities as are not limited by the boundaries of the district of any one local authority or do not relate exclusively to the development of any such

¹ Town Planning Act 1926, Section 13.

² The time limit was subsequently extended to 1932 and then to 1937.

³ N.Z.P.D. Vol.210, p.699

district."¹ In the words of the 1944-45 Select Committee on Local Government, the Act "recognises that the principles of physical planning should apply to an area in which there is a community of economic and social interest."²

To achieve this purpose two or more adjoining local authorities were invited to unite, either on their own initiative or at the suggestion of the Town Planning Board,³ to constitute a Regional Planning Committee to be composed of representatives of the local bodies themselves. Delegates to the Committee were to be appointed by the constituent local bodies and would hold office at the pleasure of their Councils. The Town Planning Board was charged with the duty of naming the principal local authority which would be responsible for meeting the major share of expenditure commensurate with its voting power on the Committee. The Act supplied the territorial local bodies with an institution which they could collectively use for the purpose of providing regional planning guidance. It specified that the regional scheme ^{was} ~~was~~ not binding on constituent local authorities, serving only as a "model".

¹ Town Planning Amendment Act 1929, Part II

² Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives Vol. II 1945 1 - 15, p.25

³ Set up by the Act.

The 1944-45 Select Committee of the House, in its survey of local government functions and organisation, noted a sharp rise in interest in town planning in the previous two years, an interest associated with the anticipation of post-war reconstruction. It sought to have regional planning more closely associated with the local bodies since it foresaw economic development of perhaps an unprecedented nature, making the need for regional as opposed to district planning, more urgent than ever before. To this end, it recommended the transfer of the existing Regional Planning Committees, then under the Town Planning Branch of the Organisation for National Development, to local bodies as intended by the Act. They were in fact operating as rehabilitation advisory boards rather than Regional Planning Committees. The Select Committee considered regional planning in a broad sense and envisaged comprehensive blueprints for economic and social development within the terms of which the existing local bodies could work. The Select Committee expressed its belief that the Town Planning Act 1926 and its 1929 Amendment set out sufficiently comprehensive objectives, and suitable planning institutions

to achieve these objectives but that legislation was required to compel the execution of the recommendations.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1953 in its preamble is described as a consolidating and amending Act and significantly reverses the order of treatment of regional planning and district scheme planning. The Town Planning Act 1926 was concerned with the preparation of district planning schemes by single territorial local bodies while regional planning was dealt with as an afterthought in the 1929 Amendment Act. In the 1953 Act regional planning is dealt with first in recognition of its critical importance.

The 1953 Act confirmed the feature which distinguished the Regional Planning Committee of the 1929 Act from other ad hoc authorities - the fact that its membership was drawn from and responsible to the territorial local authorities themselves. Part One of the Act "Regional Planning Schemes", merely repeated the main provisions of the 1929 Act with the difference that the regional planning schemes produced became binding on constituent local bodies. Much of the "general purpose" of the 1929 Act was repeated word for word in the new act including

the key instruction for the "coordination of all such public improvements, utilities, services and amenities as are not limited by the boundaries of the district of any one local authority, or do not relate exclusively to the development of any such district."¹ As before, any two or more adjacent Councils might unite to constitute a Regional Planning Authority, either on their own initiative or acting on the advice of the Minister. Constituent Councils are to jointly determine representation on the Planning Authorities. Failing their agreement this will be decided for them by the Minister. Associate members able to contribute a wide range of relevant qualifications are provided for in both Acts. The important difference lies in the status of plans produced by the Regional Planning Committees and the Regional Planning Authorities. Whereas under the 1929 Act the regional scheme was to serve only as a "model" for constituent Councils, under the new Act once a regional scheme or part of a scheme becomes operative it is binding on constituent local bodies. A regional scheme becomes operative when approved by all local bodies concerned but if any local body disapproves then the

¹ Town and Country Planning Act 1953. Section 3 (11)

Regional Planning Authority may take the scheme to the Town and Country Appeal Board for decision. As in the 1929 Act a survey of regional resources is to precede the preparation of the Regional Scheme. In both Acts a principal Council is to be appointed to be responsible for expenditure, though all uniting Councils will contribute.

Part two of the Act deals with District Schemes, the subject of the Town Planning Act 1926. Opening the debate on the second reading of the Bill in 1953, Mr. Goosman, the Minister of Works, noted that out of 150 local bodies required to produce district schemes under the 1926 Act, only seventeen had completed town plans and had them approved.¹ Under the new Act, every local body is required to prepare a district scheme of its own district or have one prepared for it by the Ministry of Works, the full expense being charged to the Council. Regional Planning Authorities are to make recommendations to Councils on the compatibility of their district schemes, with the regional scheme and may appeal, if necessary, against any provision of a district scheme.

Under Section 8 (b) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1953, any planning body constituted for a metropolitan

area before the passage of the Act, whether formally constituted under the Town Planning Act 1926 or not , was considered to become a Regional Planning Authority under the new Act. Accordingly, on the 1st February 1954, the Christchurch Metropolitan Town Planning Committee automatically became the Christchurch Regional Planning Authority. Up to this time the Metropolitan Town Planning Committee had no legal standing but was informally supported by Christchurch local bodies. Its Chairman in 1954 was Mr. W. S. MacGibbon, a City Councillor. As there was some doubt as to whether the Metropolitan Town Planning Committee was such a body as referred to in Section 8 (b) of the Act, the six uniting Councils decided to take action under Section 7 (1) of the Act and united for the purpose of preparing a regional scheme. This was formally approved by the Minister of Works and published in the New Zealand Gazette on 9th June 1955.¹

The process of conversion of the Metropolitan Town Planning Committee into the Christchurch Regional Planning Authority began at a meeting of local body representatives on 5th April 1954. This meeting was convened by the Mayor of Christchurch to discuss local body responsibilities

¹ Minutes of Christchurch Regional Planning Authority
Vol. 1, 1954 - 57, p.265

under the new Act. The Metropolitan Town Planning Committee, (which retained its identity) in a letter to the meeting recommended that the City Council should have four representatives on the Regional Planning Authority, that one of these should be Chairman and that the other five or six local bodies should have one representative each. At a meeting on 23rd August 1954, the Metropolitan Town Planning Committee reconstituted itself as the Christchurch Regional Planning Authority. City Council representation of four, one of whom was to be Chairman, was confirmed. Riccarton Borough and the Counties of Halswell, Heathcote, Paparua and Waimari were each to have one representative.¹ The City Council was formally named the principal Council as required by the Act.

There were some who believed that such a Regional Planning Authority might in time far surpass the planning function allotted it by the 1953 Act, and assume a key role in local government reform. In the debate on the second reading of the Town and Country Planning Bill, Mr. Halstead M.P. for Tamaki, argued that one reason for the failure of local body reform up to that time was that regional development plans did not exist as a basis for

¹ Waimari has since been awarded two representatives.

reorganisation. According to Mr. Halstead "the Bill will enable a Regional Authority in Auckland not only to lay down a physical plan for Auckland but also to make suggestions for the future of its administrative control.." ¹ He argued that once there was a regional development plan a regional or metropolitan commission of works would be required to carry out its proposals. Mr. Halstead envisaged that this Commission of Works would gradually extend its responsibilities to include those of the ad hoc authorities. A similar approach to local body reform was suggested by the Commissioner of Works in his submission to the Local Bills Committee in 1960. He foresaw regional all-purpose Councils evolving from Regional Planning Authorities. ²

In Christchurch there is no likelihood of this happening but the Regional Planning Authority has nevertheless assumed unexpected functions in a way not anticipated by the 1953 Act. In the course of performing its long term and overall planning function it has isolated two potential ad hoc authority functions and assumed them for itself. The Authority's Summit Road and Air Pollution Committees are primarily functional,

¹ N.Z.P.D. Vol.299, p.800

² Report of the Local Bills Committee of the House of Representatives, p20

not planning Committees. Though comparatively insignificant examples these two committees illustrate the way in which the Authority may extend its operations.

The Regional Planning Authority in Christchurch is important not because it may create or assume further functional responsibilities as a result of its planning activities. It is important because it enforces an essential measure of co-ordination among local bodies in the area.¹ The Regional Planning Authority is in a sense the ultimate ad hoc authority. It has assumed the long-term planning responsibility of each local body in the region. Each local body has its plan or view of its long term purpose but in terms of the region as a whole this ambition is partial, perhaps distorting. It is the Authority's function to discipline these ambitions, balancing them all in the regional scheme.

This perhaps accords with Mr. Halstead's hopes. Unfortunately, however, since its establishment the Authority has suffered from what appears to be a contradiction between its constitution and its purpose. On the one hand, because it was set up by, and virtually as

¹ It is worth noting that the Town and Country Planning Act 1953 became law at the very time when the Local Government Commission, as reconstituted under the Local Government Commission Act 1953, was seriously weakened as a device to achieve local government reorganisation. Though there was certainly no such connection intended by the Government, the importance of the Town and Country Planning Act 1953 was enhanced by the passage of legislation diminishing the authority of the Local Government Commission.

a committee of local bodies, it has been assumed that in some way it is directly responsible to the local bodies. This has amounted to an assumption by some that the preponderant local body, the City Council, must have the principal voice in its direction. On the other hand the Authority's purpose is manifestly a regional purpose which is quite distinct from the purpose of even its largest constituent.

City Council misinterpretation of its relation with the Regional Planning Authority has been the principal factor in the history of the Authority's attempt to establish a defined and accepted place in the local body structure. The first indication of the City Council's intention was revealed by a dispute about the Chairmanship of the Authority. On 30th August 1954 the Authority elected its first Chairman, City Councillor W. S. MacGibbon. At the next meeting of the Authority on 27th September, Councillor Tait, speaking for the City Council, said that he believed the agreement to have been not merely that a City representative be Chairman but that any nominee must first have City Council approval. The Labour dominated City Council did not approve of the Authority's choice - Mr. MacGibbon was a Citizens' Association Councillor.

His replacement as one of the City's four representatives was intended to demonstrate the Council's intention of asserting a specifically City Council interest in the Authority.

Though the City Council was successful in installing a Chairman of whom it approved this was a hollow victory. In time it became clear that the Authority would assume a largely independent regional direction no matter who its Chairman was. This is a characteristic of its planning function which is a professional exercise having a discipline and momentum of its own. Town planning skills are exercised for a clear regional purpose under the terms of the 1953 Act. It is not the City Council's function to dominate and use the Regional Planning Authority but to be disciplined itself by the Authority .

Today the City Council appears to half understand the necessity for this coordinating function. From the point of view of its own concerns it appreciates the Authority's value as a mediator or screen with the surrounding local bodies. On the wider issue of coordination it recognises that the necessity for a regional planning scheme cannot be denied. But because planning

is not fully understood as a continuous process of revision and adjustment it finds the Authority's continuous concern for aspects of the regional scheme particularly irksome. Instead of setting out a precise regional plan and then stepping aside to let the local bodies get on with the business of implementing it, the Authority is constantly querying proposals which the local bodies regard as within their own sphere. Of all the local bodies the City Council is least amenable to being 'coordinated' in such detail. Very conscious of its overwhelming size and employing specialist technical officers of its own¹ the City Council does not easily submit to the Authority's "watching brief".²

It is not surprising that a City Councillor unfamiliar with the work of the Authority might feel resentment at the ability of the Authority to exercise such a supervising power over his Council. Councillor P. J. Skellerup for instance, has complained of Authority "dictation" in the past.³ Nevertheless, he told the author in December 1966 that his own attitude to the Authority, along with that of other Citizens' Councillors had become much less critical.

¹ The City Council employs a town planner and a traffic engineer.

² Mr. C. B. Millar

³ 'Star' 6th June 1964. In connection with the Authority's advocacy of the Master Transportation Plan.

Some Councillors are more positive. Mr. A. R. Guthrey an experienced and influential Citizens' Councillor who became Deputy-Chairman of the Authority in 1966, understands and welcomes the Authority's regional coordinating function. He takes the view that in any case of conflict between what he judges to be regional interests and his own Council's interests, he must invariably take a regional view. Though nominated by the City Council he does not consider himself obliged merely to carry his Council's viewpoint to the Authority for he believes that such practice is incompatible with the regional purpose for which the Authority is established.¹

On the Labour side, Councillor N. G. Pickering, leader of the Labour group, has interpreted the recent advent of Councillor Guthrey as Deputy-Chairman of the Regional Planning Authority, as a fresh attempt to achieve the regional purposes which failed with the defeat of the two-tier local government proposals in 1964-1965. There is certainly a much greater reluctance on the part of Labour Councillors to accept the implications for the City Council of the Authority's independent regional function. Councillor Pickering believes that Councillor Guthrey's

¹ Councillor Guthrey was one of the promoters of the Christchurch Regional Authority Bill.

proper course is to carry Council instructions to the Authority. Councillor H. E. Denton, currently Labour's representative on the Authority believes that he must adopt a primarily City Council view and is adamant that the Authority should be restricted to an advisory role. As the Council minority, Labour supply only one of the four Council representatives to the Authority and feel powerless to check what they believe to be an undesirable development in local body affairs.

The attitude of the smaller territorial authorities to the Regional Planning Authority was at first heavily influenced by the overt ambition of the City Council to dominate the Authority. Commenting on the question of the disputed Chairmanship in 1954, Mr. E. J. Bradshaw, Riccarton Borough representative on the Authority, implicitly rejected the assumption that the Authority was merely the servant of the local bodies. Mr. Bradshaw contended that the Authority was an autonomous body set up under an Act of Parliament and that the City Council's denial of the Authority's right to freely elect a Chairman was an improper interference in the affairs of another local body.¹ This bold anticipation of the Authority's

¹ Minutes of the Regional Planning Authority
Vol. I, 1954-57, p.11

independence looked beyond the circumstances of the Authority's constitution to the performance of its function.

Yet it took time for the Authority to establish its independent function and in the first years fears of City Council domination were widespread. When the City Council agreed to the transfer of its Town Planning Officer, Miss Nancy Northcroft, to head the Authority while remaining on the City's payroll these fears seemed to be confirmed. Some feared rather more than City Council domination. It was believed that the Authority was a device to secure the substance of amalgamation and that City Council domination of the Authority was the first step in this process. As the Authority gradually established the autonomous role which Mr. Bradshaw predicted for it in 1954, the opponents of amalgamation have, paradoxically, been able to argue that the coordinating function of the Authority has eliminated the necessity for local body reform.

By assuming the Chairmanship of the Authority in February 1960, Mr. Bradshaw gave formal notice of the Authority's achievement of independent status. The

Chairmanship, symbol of City Council dominance, was not readily conceded. In 1957, Mr. Bradshaw was nominated and seconded for the Chairmanship but declined on the grounds that he could not accept it unless he was first approved by the City Council. By 1960 it was clear that the Chairmanship was of little use to the City Council. As the representative of a small local body which poses no threat to others Mr. Bradshaw has been free to adopt a thorough-going regional point of view.

Current attitudes towards the Authority among the smaller local bodies are based, on the whole, on an adequate understanding of, and approval for, the Authority's function. Because Councillors in the smaller territorial bodies generally have more time and are not confined by party political attitudes, they are more likely to take a sympathetic view of the Authority. More important, they are conscious of being representatives of small local bodies which are only parts of a larger whole. Consequently they more readily appreciate the Authority's coordinating role. There is, however, at least one exception. Paparua County Council insists that its representative operate as a messenger who merely carries instructions from his Council to the Authority. Despite this close

supervision the County Council has discussed the possibility of withdrawing from the Authority on the grounds that they have often found themselves committed to a certain course of action in advance of their discussion of it.¹

Since 1960 when he became Chairman of the Authority, Mr. Bradshaw has sought to persuade Councils' representatives to adopt a regional viewpoint in their role as Authority members. While this appeal has been partially successful, the persistence of Paparua's attitude and the more intractable problem of the City Council has forced him to seek other remedies to the problem of fully ensuring the Authority's independence. Late in 1966 he suggested that if the Authority were publicly elected it would be a much stronger and more independent body. Mr. Bradshaw envisaged that the Authority should continue to have the same number and proportion of voting members but that instead of being appointed by their Councils they should be elected within their territorial local body areas.¹ This appears to be a proposal for a very limited form of Regional Authority which is to be restricted to one ad hoc authority function - regional

¹ 'Press' 15th November 1966.

planning. The immediate problem would be one of finance. If the Authority were to be made directly responsible to the public some alternative method of financing would have to be found for the local bodies could hardly be expected to contribute to the expenses of a planning organisation in which they had no vote.

Yet this solution to the difficulties of the Authority could only exacerbate them. If implemented the proposal would have the effect of drawing a hard and fast line between those who plan for the region and those who implement these plans, with the result that the difficulties and resentments which exist today would become intolerable. The system as it operates gives the constituents of the Authority a voice in their own co-ordination. The Authority is a forum where local bodies send representatives to supervise the production of a regional planning scheme. Though unusually dependent upon technical advice they must still take major policy decisions on priorities and alternatives. The Regional Planning Authority at once controls and is controlled. The apparent contradiction between constitution and function - between local body political control and the independent direction of the

planning function - is no contradiction but the compromise on which the Authority operates. If the Authority had the means to assert its full independence it would fail. With the mandatory help of the regional planning scheme the local bodies coordinate themselves.

CHAPTER IIThe Development of the
Master Transportation Plan

Schedule One of the Town and Country Planning Act 1953 lists "matters to be dealt with in regional planning schemes" but these matters may be undertaken "as may be appropriate to the circumstances".¹ At the 5th April 1954 Conference of local bodies convened by the Mayor of Christchurch to discuss the responsibilities of local bodies under the Act, this question of priorities was touched upon by Mr. Somers, the City Engineer. His suggestion was that the first projects of the new Regional Planning Authority might be urban-rural zoning and main road planning.² In fact though, the first major project undertaken by the Authority was a survey of existing land use as the basis for the determination of an urban-rural division. On 1st September 1959 Section One (Rural Zone) of the regional scheme became operative. Commenting on the significance of this Miss Northcroft said that with sprawl contained "Christchurch has a little breathing space in which to try to find solutions to the more complex problems of its urban developments and requirements."³

¹ Town and Country Planning Act 1953 Section 6 (1)

² Regional Planning Authority Minutes 1954-57, p.1

³ Regional Planning Authority Minutes 1958-60, p.695

Though the urban-rural division had first priority, a number of other major projects were either begun or under consideration by 1955. These included the study of present and future industrial zones, a study of the commercial and shopping areas and the distribution of the major recreational areas. It was assumed that once the study of these major elements of the City's future development were sufficiently advanced a transportation study to link all the elements together would be begun.

However, developments outside the Authority's domain forced an early, possibly premature, consideration of the issue of traffic and transportation planning. In February 1955, the Christchurch District Office of the Ministry of Works drew the attention of the National Roads Board to the problem of congestion on the Main North Road out of the City, especially in the section between Chaney's Corner and the Kaiapoi Beach turn-off. This initiative was taken in response to complaints in the Christchurch papers and by organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Canterbury Progress League.¹ On 20th April 1956, the 'Press' reported the recommendation of the engineer to the National Roads Board (Mr. L.C. Malt)

¹ Interview Mr. G. C. Suggate Ministry of Works.

that Christchurch ought to begin preparation "of a master plan for a system of wide highways leading into and through the City." This recommendation was made on the occasion of the National Roads Board's approval of the Auckland Master Transportation Plan, completed late in 1955.

In response to this suggestion a combined meeting of the Christchurch Regional Planning Authority's Executive and Technical Committees on 24th April recommended the establishment of a sub-committee to outline an approach to the problem of preparing a transportation plan for the City. Though she sponsored the recommendation Miss Northcroft warned that other sectors of the regional scheme ought to be further advanced before effort was "concentrated on this one aspect of the Plan".¹

On 3rd July 1956, the Authority resolved to set up a sub-committee to define the traffic and transportation problem. It was charged to decide what studies were required and to say how they were to be done. The Sub-Committee was to enlarge its membership as necessary and was free to consult with any interested organisation.² This Traffic and Transport Sub-Committee met for the first time on 14th August 1956, and comprised Mr. Somers,

¹ Regional Planning Authority Minutes 1954-57, p.143

² Ibid p.206

the City Engineer as Chairman, Messrs. H. B. Goodman (Ministry of Works engineer), L. J. Bentley (New Zealand Railways Engineer), D. P. McLellan (County Engineer Waimari) and Miss Northcroft. Set up by, and responsible to the Authority, the Sub-Committee was appropriately given its general direction by its town planner. It is important to note at the outset that the entire project was not isolated but was disciplined within the broader context of the Authority's planning work. In a preliminary report to the first meeting of the Sub-Committee, Miss Northcroft asked its members not merely to think in terms of solutions to traffic and transportation problems but to consider the effects of solutions on the form of the City and on the lives of its citizens.¹

At a second meeting of the Sub-Committee the initiative was again taken by Miss Northcroft. She compared the methods and objectives of the recently completed Auckland Master Transportation Plan with the Christchurch project. The Auckland Plan was in effect the vindication of a master roading plan already prepared in 1954. In Christchurch, not only were there no master roading proposals to be tested but the studies on which

¹ Authority Minute Book 'Traffic and Transport'
August 1956 - February 1964, Pp. 2 - 4

any roading proposals were partially dependent - the elements of a town plan - had hardly been begun. In addition there were no major physical features in Christchurch determining the general direction of main routes. With all these factors in mind Miss Northcroft recommended that preliminary studies of the obvious weak points in the existing street system be done. By this means an overall picture could be pieced together. These studies would in turn lead to the development of sketch plans of highway systems. Miss Northcroft recommended that the collection of statistical information on the growth of population and vehicle registrations should be begun at once. Also suggested were a study of existing parking facilities and future parking needs, and a comparative study over a long period of the capacity of private as compared with public transport.

At a meeting of the Sub-Committee on 20th June 1957, Mr. J. Nauta, a City Council engineer seconded to the Authority and working full-time on traffic and transport problems, reported the results of a cordon count of the City Centre conducted on 21st March 1957. This exercise was a nearly exact repetition of a cordon count conducted

in March 1952 by the City Council and with which it was compared. The comparison defined the overall traffic increase and revealed a disproportionately large increase during the early morning peak period, indicating that a larger proportion of the increased number of car owners were travelling to and from work by private car. This indication reinforced the impression that the private car was the preferred means of transport for an ever increasing number.

On 27th September 1957, the Traffic and Transport Sub-Committee discussed two broad alternative solutions to the emerging problem. The first, sponsored by Mr. Nauta, suggested the improvement of selected radials by prohibiting parking and restricting the number of crossings and right hand turns. Ample off-street parking would be provided at the belts from where journeys to the City centre would be completed by bus. Mr. G. C. Suggate (a Ministry of Works Engineer who had been attending Sub-Committee meetings since February 1957), offered instead a plan which imposed two 'freeways' on the street system. The alternatives were merely stated - a decision on the form of the solution depended on further exploration of the problem.

By mid-1957 opinion was growing in the Sub-Committee that its work had reached a point where it would be unwise to continue in isolation from interests affected by the work. Material collected from overseas, especially from Britain, the Netherlands and the United States, and studies already carried out had revealed a task of considerable magnitude. At first though, the problem was thought to be only one of making good the omission of one or two specialist skills on the Sub-Committee. The Traffic Superintendent or his Deputy from the City Council Traffic Department were most often mentioned in this connection.

In his report to the Authority for the year ended 31st March, 1958, Mr. Somers discussed the needs of the Sub-Committee in the light of the problem which was beginning to emerge. In the first place, not only were further specialists needed but there was a need for a pooling of information by organisations affected by the problem. This need in turn pointed to the necessity for new organisational arrangements to secure co-operation. Mr. Somers' report suggested the widening of Sub-Committee membership and the setting up

of one or more working committees. At its 11th July meeting the Sub-Committee clarified this suggestion when it recommended that the Authority establish a political committee of thirteen and a separate working committee.

When the Authority took up this suggestion to politicise the planning process it had two objectives. The immediate objective was to acquaint the Authority's local body constituents with the development of the Plan so that they might be made aware of its possible effects on their current and future programmes. Secondly, the Authority's purpose was to set up a political committee to oversee the complete definition of the problem and the development of a solution to it. This committee was intended to be representative of all the major interests which would be affected by the eventual solution. It was hoped that representatives of constituent Councils on the Committee would keep their Councils informed of progress and that when the solution was presented, would act as advocates for it.

On 3rd September 1958, the Authority convened a meeting in the Chamber of Commerce Hall of local bodies and interested organisations. At the close of this meeting

Mr. Bradshaw put a motion calling for the setting up of a committee not exceeding twelve. Councillor Guthrey seconded by Councillor Griffiths, also of the City Council, put an amendment to the effect that the Authority should be freed to work without the restriction of the proposed committee. Mr. Bradshaw and Miss Northcroft were united in believing that the Authority could not use such freedom. They knew that in the last analysis the Authority could not assume, as Councillor Griffiths suggested, "that local authorities would give it their ardent support."¹ They were insisting that the principle of voluntary coordination on which the Authority operated must apply to this project as a special arrangement. To give the project some chance of success the Authority had to make its constituent Councils party to it from the beginning.

Four speakers discussed the problem. Mr. Somers made the keynote contribution when he presented the main findings of the Traffic and Transport Sub-Committee. He predicted that the number of registered vehicles would double in the fifteen year period from 1956 to 1971 and that traffic on the radials in the same period would increase

¹ Minutes 'Traffic and Transport' August 1956 -
February 1964 p.290

within the range of 80% to 170%. Mr. Somers also stressed the inter-relation of weaknesses in the existing street system and argued for the necessity of planning for the metropolitan area as a whole. His view was endorsed by Mr. A. E. Clark, District Commissioner for the Ministry of Works who pledged the Department's cooperation and support for the Authority's task. Mr. J. F. Fardell, Manager of the Christchurch Transport Board, who spoke third, warned the meeting of the dangerous consequences of planning for the use of the private car at the expense of public transport. He predicted that if public transport did not "survive the competition of the private motor car" then the City would be "turned inside out."¹ Miss Northcroft put the project in perspective by stressing the basic relationship of traffic to land use which meant that transportation planning must be determined within the wider context of town planning.

Two days later, on 5th September, the Traffic and Transport Sub-Committee met to consolidate the work of the combined meeting. The Sub-Committee recommended that the proposed main committee should comprise two representatives from the City Council, two from the Ministry of

¹ Minutes ~~of~~ 'Traffic and Transport' August 1956 -
February 1964 p.276

Works, one from Waimari, two representing Riccarton, Kaiapoi, Paparua, Halswell, Heathcote and Eyre, one each from the Christchurch Transport Board, the Automobile Association, a representative of heavy transport, Traffic and Transport Working Committee, and one other if necessary. The Chairman of the Authority should be an ex officio member.

The Traffic and Transport Sub-Committee also recommended the formation of a small working committee to actually do or direct the technical works and to be composed of technical officers drawn from the City Engineer's Department, the Ministry of Works, Waimari County, the City Council Traffic Department, the Transport Department and the Authority. A senior officer was needed to take charge of the work and Mr. Suggate who was on the spot and familiar with the work seemed to be the ideal man. The Ministry of Works was, therefore, approached with the request that Mr. Suggate be seconded to the Authority for twelve months.¹

The political committee, known as the Traffic and Transport Advisory Committee met for the first time on 24th February 1959, and Miss Mary McLean, Chairman of the

¹ Minutes 'Traffic and Transport' August 1956 - February 1964. Pp. 256 0-8

City Council Traffic Committee, was elected Chairman without opposition. Yet though the Chairmanship went automatically to the City Council, Miss McLean did not possess sufficient standing in the City Council itself to win for the Committee the authority which its sponsor, the Regional Planning Authority, desired for it. She was not able to impress upon the City Council the importance and soundness of the work being undertaken.

The Authority's hope that the City Council would be favourably disposed towards the project was further prejudiced early in 1960 when the Authority was obliged to contest aspects of the City Council's district planning scheme. In February 1960 the Authority objected to zoning proposals (commercial and industrial) for Ferry Road on the grounds that since the road was a major outlet, development along it ought not to be encouraged.¹ Some Councillors were not amused at the spectacle of the Authority, a body largely financed by City Council contributions,² contesting City Council proposals before the Town and Country Planning Appeal Board.

Although the Traffic and Transport Advisory Committee was largely a failure as a device to enlist City Council

¹ Minutes of the Traffic and Transport Advisory Committee p.150

² 65% in 1966-67

interest and support, liaison with other territorial bodies was good. Mr. J. I. Colligan, for instance, who served throughout the duration of the Committee as the Waimari representative kept his Council fully informed and therefore rather more favourably disposed towards the project.

Other members of the Advisory Committee rendered important services to the project by supplementing with their specialist knowledge, the work of the technical officers. Mr. D. J. Cunningham¹ supplied invaluable information on truck movements and the special needs of heavy vehicles. Mr. J. R. Maling of the Automobile Association kept the wide interests of his organisation before the Committee and afforded the Authority valuable means of consultation with an influential interest group during the planning process.

The working Sub-Committee met for the first time on 25th March 1959. It comprised at this time Messrs. J. F. Fardell (Manager, Christchurch Transport Board), H. B. Goodman (Ministry of Works engineer), D. L. Hogan (District Officer Transport Department), C. G. Kellar (City Council Traffic Superintendent), D. A. Lane (District

¹ The representative of both the New Zealand Road Transport Alliance Inc. and the Christchurch and Suburban Carriers' and Customhouse Agents Association.

Designing Engineer Ministry of Works), D. P. McLellan (County Engineer Waimari), Miss Northcroft and Mr. Suggate, represented the Authority, and Mr. Somers who was Chairman.

Mr. Suggate, who had been seconded to the Authority for one year from 12th January 1959 had already delivered a major report to the Advisory Committee on 10th March surveying the progress of work up to that time and outlining work yet to be done. In this report Mr. Suggate discussed a programme of surveys of travel and traffic, and the study of the relation of this movement to the land use which generated it. The intention was to use the surveys and other studies to build a complete picture of the 1959 traffic situation. Then all the variables would be projected up to 1980. Finally, four categories of transportation facilities could be formulated in outline - overall roading requirements, service roads for the central business district, parking needs and public transport needs.¹

In mid-1957 most of the staff of the Authority were engaged in preparing and executing ten surveys carried out in a ten week period from mid-August to mid-October. The surveys fell into three groups. Travel surveys.

¹ Minutes of the Traffic and Transport Advisory Committee Pp. 6 - 9

sought to establish the origins, destinations, purposes, methods of transport and time chosen for a large sample of individual trips. A random sample of 3,000 households within the built-up area¹ received a questionnaire by post. Special log sheets were issued to 20% of the taxis and to a random sample of 12½% of the trade vehicles in the built up area. Secondly, traffic surveys recorded total numbers and types of vehicles and their passengers. Finally, a parking survey recorded the number of parked vehicles both on and off the streets within the central traffic district in a twelve hour period.²

The method and subsequent analysis of these surveys were largely derived from procedure manuals issued by the United States Public Administration Service. Much of the survey material was transferred to punched cards by the Ministry of Works in Wellington. This information was then converted into tables of data from which 1980 traffic could be projected. At a meeting of the Technical Sub-Committee on 28th September 1961 a map of the City Street system with estimated 1980 traffic assigned to it was tabled. It was agreed that "provided

¹ 5% of the total.

² W. B. Johnston (ed.): 'Traffic in a New Zealand City', Appendix C

the pertinent assumptions and qualifications were included there was no reason not to publish the information".¹ It was suggested that the information might be published in a special newspaper supplement. This decision to reveal the details of the problem opened a new phase in the planning process.

¹ Minutes of the Traffic and Transport Technical
Sub-Committee p.444

CHAPTER IIIIntroduction of the Outline Plan

Phase two of the planning process began with the fitting of the traffic estimate for 1980 into the existing street system. At a meeting of the Traffic and Transport Tedhnical Sub-Committee on 26th October 1961, it was agreed that the Regional Planning Officer might present to the full Authority a map of the existing street system with the 1980 traffic estimate assigned to it to make clear to the Authority and the public the magnitude of the traffic and transportation problem faced by the City.¹ This decision set in train a sequence of events leading to the publication of the Outline Plan in September 1962.

When the decision was taken to reveal the problem it was assumed that the public which was now being admitted to the planning process would be a passive entity which had merely to be convinced and would offer no protest. Unfortunately this proved not to be the case, indeed the public revelation of the extent and nature of the problem led in time to the loss of exclusive control of the planning process by the Authority. In retrospect it is possible to see that the Regional Planning Authority in 1961 - 62, when the Outline of the Master Transportation Plan was

¹ Minutes: 'Traffic and Transport' August 1956 - February 1964; p.451

being developed, was trapped by incompatible objectives. On the one hand it was seeking to convince the public of the potential problem of an inadequate roading system, in preparation for their introduction to the solution. On the other hand opinion in the Authority assumed the development of the solution to the detailed design stage before it was revealed to the public. However, the admission that a solution was nearing completion in outline form provoked a demand for its publication long before the Authority was ready to reveal it.

It has been argued that the essential prelude to the publication of a plan offering the solution to a problem is the familiarisation of the public with the problem alone.¹ It is hoped that by convincingly demonstrating the reality of a problem resistance to the solution will be reduced and that public acceptance will be easy. Miss Northcroft was acting very much on this assumption when she delivered a report to the Authority on 7th November 1961 entitled: Christchurch Master Transportation Plan - a Discussion of the 1980 Traffic Situation and its Implications. While conceding the impatience of many to see the solution Miss Northcroft concluded that "an appreciation of the situation I have tried to describe is

¹ Mr. C. B. Millar

a first essential to the understanding and proper appraisal of any proposals that are put forward."¹ So intent was the Authority on convincing, what it believed would be a sceptical public of the magnitude of the problem that Mr. Bradshaw overdid the drama by saying that "the implications which arise are quite shocking and the Master Transportation Plan is going to shock the community to the core."² The very passion with which the Authority put the problem invited a demand for the publication of the solution as soon as it was formulated in outline form.

The Report presented ^{to} ~~the~~ the Authority on 7th November was essentially a commentary on a map showing the assignment, to all major existing streets, of the estimated traffic they would be required to carry in twenty four hours on a September/October Wednesday in 1980. Miss Northcroft also acknowledged the preparation of two or three 'plans' and the experimental assignment of 1980 traffic to them but insisted that the principal purpose of the Report was "to explain the implications of the assignment of 1980 traffic and the situation it has revealed."³

The Report predicted over the whole built-up area, two and one half times more vehicular trips in 1980 than in

¹ 7th November Report; p.16

² 'Press' 8th November 1961.

³ 7th November Report; p.8

1959 and a 107% increase in trips in and out of the Central Business District. Heavy increases in traffic over very much longer lengths of key radials could be expected before 1980 in many cases. An estimated 32,750 vehicles per day would be seeking to use Colombo Street South in 1980 compared with 13,000 in 1961. The critical Bealey Avenue/Papanui Road intersection would be impassable for long periods of the day.^{1, 2}

Having stressed the enormous increase of 1980 over 1959/1961 traffic Miss Northcroft went on to offer alternative solutions in very general terms. The existing road system's traffic capacity could be improved by imposing further restrictions on parking and stopping, to temporarily alleviate but not to solve the problem of the anticipated traffic increase. Alternatively, new routes could be built to lift the unmanageable burden from existing radials so that their traffic volumes could be reduced or held at a comfortable figure in the region of 10,000 vehicles per day.

¹ Press 8th November 1961.

² Miss Northcroft was well aware that acceptance of the Authority's estimate of the problem depended upon the acceptance of the forecast traffic volumes. At the time the Authority considered its estimate to be conservative and this has since been confirmed. In September 1962 the Outline Plan predicted a growth rate of vehicles on the roads of four percent per annum but between 1959 and 1963 a growth rate of six per cent was recorded on the radials approaching the belts. Report on Comments received by the Regional Planning Authority on the Outline Plan. p.28

The two Christchurch papers were agreed on their choice of alternative . In editorials on 8th November the 'Press' said: "probably there is no real choice", while the 'Star' commented: "the plain fact is that in this matter, Christchurch has little choice". It seemed that the Authority was successfully preparing the way for a solution which simply could be not rejected.

Miss Northcroft sought further opportunities to put the problem and prepare a climate of opinion which would be receptive of the solution when it was eventually offered. She delivered the 1980 traffic situation address at open meetings of the Riccarton, Paparua and Waimari Councils and finally "after a great struggle" to a meeting of the City Council on 3rd May 1962. Fourteen councillors from a total of twenty were present. The most successful meeting in terms of attendance was organised by the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce on 12th June. One hundred people were present.

In her 7th November Report, Miss Northcroft referred rather ambiguously to two or three 'plans' to which the 1980 traffic estimate was being experimentally assigned. At the confidential level of meetings of the Traffic and Transport Technical Sub-Committee on 26th October and

1. Interview

20th November 1961, a tentative proposal showing a motorway running towards the City centre on a line East of Papanui Road was under consideration as a demonstration of "the order of magnitude of a motorway type solution."¹ On 22nd February 1962, the Technical Sub-Committee approved a report on the progress of alternative outline proposals to be submitted by Miss Northcroft to the Traffic and Transport Advisory Committee. This Report was an explanation and commentary on four maps showing the location of four possible motorway systems and related roads, designated MTP1, MTP2, MTP3 and MTP4. All were devised by Mr. Suggate and each was to some extent a development of the design which preceded it. The Report was intended to demonstrate the complexity of the problem of designing an acceptable solution which must inevitably involve major works. It made no recommendations though it implied by its account of the development of the sequence that MTP4 was the most likely form.

On 8th May, Miss Northcroft delivered a second major Report to the Authority which went much further than the first in its anticipation of the solution. Miss Northcroft stated categorically for the first time in public that some

¹ Minutes Traffic and Transport, August 1956 - February 1964. p.452

urban motorways would have to be built. She indicated that four motorway plans and two modifications had been developed and that the most promising was being tested for its ability to cope with estimated traffic in 1980 and beyond. The principal component of this Plan when fully developed was a ten mile motorway system within the 1980 urban fence. Related main objectives in a plan hinging on this "network of arterial roads superimposed on the existing road system", were a complementary parking plan and provision for the development of a "rapid transport system."¹

In the first section of this Report Miss Northcroft declared the intention of the planning team to prepare and submit to the Authority as soon as was possible a "basic outline plan showing the general location and the major improvements required to the existing street system. This outline plan can then be used as the basis for discussion with local authorities in the region and with Government Departments and, when agreement has been reached, can become the transportation section of the Regional Planning Scheme."²

In terms of a three phase development of the Master Transportation Plan devised by the Technical Sub-Committee

¹ 8th May Report p.2

² Ibid p.12

at its meeting on 22nd June 1961, phase two - the assessment of deficiencies and the development of tentative solutions - was nearing completion with the anticipated presentation of the outline solution. After the incorporation of this outline solution into the Regional Scheme the legal responsibility of the Authority would be at an end. Phase three, the development of the chosen solution in detail, and its execution, was the responsibility of the local bodies and the Government Departments which would pay for the works.

The Authority now feared, as Miss Northcroft made clear in her 8th May Report, the end of development of the Master Transportation Plan after it was incorporated into the Regional Scheme unless arrangements were made in advance for the execution of detailed design work. It was even uncertain as to who could or would do the work. Miss Northcroft in her Report suggested the National Roads Board and the local bodies, or alternatively the Authority itself. Commenting on the choice the 'Press' took it for granted that the Authority must do the detailed design work.¹ But even if the Authority were the obvious choice it would have to be confirmed by negotiation between the parties concerned. Miss Northcroft estimated that if the

¹ 'Press' 11th May 1962.

Authority were to be given the responsibility it would need an annual income of between £25,000 and £30,000 as compared with its current income of around £18,000.¹

Discussion of the Authority's requirements were premature until it was certain that the Authority was to be given the responsibility, a decision on which the Authority urgently required. At a meeting of the Authority on 4th July, Mr. Bradshaw suggested that at the meeting of local bodies shortly to be called by the Authority to discuss the Outline Plan, the most important issue to be decided was not local body approval for the Outline but the question of who was to do the detailed design. Mr. Bradshaw suggested that a special meeting of local bodies should be called to consider the question of the continued development of the Plan even before the Outline was ready to be considered.²

The Authority's preoccupation with the progressive development of the Plan was not shared by interested parties outside the Authority. The interested layman now knew just enough about the form of the solution to want to know more. As the 'Star' put it in an editorial on 13th June, while the public sought more information "the planners (wish) not to be disturbed in their planning."

¹ 8th May Report p.12

² 'Press' 5th July 1962.

Quite possibly the Authority had a further motive for keeping the solution confidential. Authority members might reasonably have assumed that while the details of the solution were known only to themselves and the constituent Councils it would remain a frozen political issue. Constituent local bodies of the Authority would be acquainted with the Plan in a political vacuum and their support for its continued development by the Authority would thus be easily obtained.

If the Authority had been able to sell what it considered to be a very good case for keeping the Plan confidential, then the history of the Master Transportation Plan might have been very different. The Plan would have been advanced to a stage where opposition to its proposals would have been ~~largely~~ a futile gesture. Development of the Outline continued in mid-1962 on this very assumption that it would shortly be submitted in a flexible form to constituent Councils in closed session.

On 24th May 1962, the Traffic and Transport Technical Sub-Committee resolved that the City Council might be advised that the Outline Plan was nearly complete and that a meeting of local bodies to discuss it could soon be arranged. Mr. Suggate advised the Sub-Committee on this

occasion that the assignment of the 1980 traffic estimate to the latest development of the plan designated MTP4B, was now complete. The Sub-Committee then agreed to adopt MTP4B and that this plan, further modified in detail as necessary should be placed before the projected meeting of local body representatives for approval in principle. It was decided that an alternative to the route across Hagley Park shown on MTP4B should be investigated and included in the submission to the meeting.¹

It has been argued that in town planning a solution emerges out of a consideration of all the relevant factors and that there are no real alternatives - the balance of advantage points in one direction only.² Sharing a similar attitude the Technical Sub-Committee was preparing a complete solution with the exception of an alternative proposal for one aspect of its Plan which in the context of the project as a whole was of little real significance. City Council representatives though, at the 27th February meeting of the Traffic and Transport Advisory Committee had already expressed misgivings at the possibility of a route across North Hagley Park as shown in MTP4. The Authority confidently anticipated approval in principle on Technical grounds for a complex technical proposal, with

¹ Minutes Traffic and Transport August 1956 -
February 1964 Pp.480-481

² Mr. C. B. Millar

special provision being made for a choice on political grounds between alternative proposals for this one aspect.

In mid-1962 the Authority was determined not to reveal the Outline Plan to the general public. The Authority had legitimate reasons for wishing to keep the Plan confidential until detailed design work was done, quite apart from any suspicion that approval would be harder to obtain under public scrutiny. It wished above all else to avoid the alarm and uncertainty which had followed a suggestion by the Ministry of Works some years earlier, for a motorway in the Marshlands Road area to link up with the Northern outlet. Mr. Bradshaw did not seek to exaggerate or mislead when he told the Authority that he was convinced publication of the Outline would lead to "confusion and chaos."¹ Publication of the Plan or parts of the Plan could not be contemplated until detailed design work had been done so that property owners would know exactly how they would be affected.

However, not everybody shared the Authority's view of the dangers of publication. In an editorial on 13th June the 'Star' in answer to Mr. Bradshaw's assertion to the Mairehau Residents' Association that if the Outline Plan were published the City would be in an uproar, replied: "So what!"

¹ 'Press' 4th July 1962.

Commenting on adverse editorial comment in both papers - the 'Press' followed the 'Star' on 15th June, saying that the Authority's failure to publish would only increase its embarrassment - Mr. Bradshaw argued that the criticism was based on a misunderstanding. The Outline he stressed, would only give a loose indication of the site of proposed works which must cause anxiety and confusion which in turn could not be resolved until detailed planning was done. The 'Star' remained unconvinced and the following day (4th July) took the matter up again. It endorsed the opinion of Mr. R. C. Neville (Waimari County Council) the one voting member of the Authority who opposed the no publication decision. Mr. Neville had argued that once released to the local bodies the Outline would become widely known, almost certainly in distorted form. The editorial threatened darkly that the Regional Planning Authority risked the destruction of its gradually built up good relations with the community.

These arguments contributed towards a complete reversal of the Authority's attitude. Authority members gradually came to see the Plan as so extensive and about to be revealed to so many local body members that it could not possibly be kept secret. Though the Authority started with the

unquestioned assumption that the Outline Plan could not under any circumstances be published yet it slowly became clear that publication could not be avoided. On 4th September when the Authority adopted the Plan in principle Mr. Bradshaw said that he still believed that publication must cause confusion among property owners but that he was now persuaded that on balance the Outline Plan was best made public. He conceded that the Plan could not be kept secret once it was revealed to local bodies, that some would take advantage of their special knowledge and that details were bound to be distorted. Mr. Bradshaw admitted that editorials in both papers, critical of the Authority's original decision not to publish had not been without effect on the Authority. Again he emphasised that the Outline to be published would be in diagrammatic form only and that routes shown were liable to be shifted two -three chains either way.¹

By adopting the Plan in principle and "submitting it to Councils as a basis for discussion"² the Authority reorganised its planning timetable. Under the terms of the Town and Country Planning Act 1953, if a constituent council of a Regional Planning Authority fails to approve any section of a Regional Scheme within four months of its

¹ "Press" 5th September 1962.

² Ibid

submission to it, the Authority can go to the Town and Country Planning Appeal Board for decision.¹ If the Board decides in favour of the Authority then the disputed plan becomes an operative section of the Regional Scheme and binding on the reluctant local body. By merely submitting the Outline Plan to the Councils for discussion and allowing until 31st March 1963 for comments on it, the Authority had adapted the formal requirements of the Act to take account of a more complex political situation. Only after putting the Outline Plan to the test of open public discussion and after considering comments arising out of this would the Authority go ahead with the procedure of making the Plan an operative part of the Regional Scheme.

Now that the Authority had conceded the need to argue for its proposals in the wider context of full public discussion it had to deal with the problem of presentation. The process of argument leading to a reversal of the decision on publication absorbed the Authority for quite some time. When the decision was finally taken the Authority found itself facing a contingency for which it was completely unprepared. Because the Authority failed to work out the implications of its decision to publish the Outline proved

¹ Town and Country Planning Act 1953 : Section 10(6)

an unsatisfactory document and a handicap to the planning process.

Yet the Authority was not unaware that the way in which the Plan was first presented and argued for might be critical. It was important that the public's first impression should be a favourable one, or at least that hostility should be anticipated and that potentially objectionable features should be presented in such a light as to minimise opposition. Miss Northcroft in particular was aware of these considerations for when it became clear that publication was probable she suggested that a good journalist be engaged to 'write up' the Plan from a layman's point of view. Funds for such a purpose were available in the form of a £1,000 trust fund, set up some years before by the Authority, for just such an irregular expense.

This suggestion was declined by the Authority principally because of the delay it would cause. Early publication was desired in the hope that the way would then be clear for a decision on the problem of how and by whom the development of the Plan was to be continued. In addition, the Authority could not be convinced of the value of taking a special initiative in the public debate which publication would begin.

Consequently The Christchurch Master Transportation Plan¹ which was revealed to a meeting of constituent local bodies of the Authority on 10th September and subsequently published, was very different from the subjective argument which Miss Northcroft would have liked to replace, or at least parallel it. Its intention was merely to inform. It made no pretension to enlist support for its proposals. Nor did it anticipate objections and seek to overcome them in advance. The one obviously provocative aspect of the Plan - the Hagley Park section of the Fendalton-Avonside motorway - appeared in the text without special comment or justification. In a late and unsuccessful effort to minimise this intrusion it was suggested that the motorway be shown on the line of Harper Avenue as far as the 'elbow'. This proposal was rejected because at that time it was not known for certain that all of Harper Avenue would not be needed in addition to the motorway and it was thought better to be frank than risk being accused of deception at a later date. Determined merely to present the 'facts' the Authority was prepared to meet its critics with one weapon alone - a determined repetition of the fact that the Plan was an 'outline only'.²

¹ Christchurch Regional Planning Authority. September 1962

² Miss Northcroft who edited the Plan told the author that she considers that even a limited attempt by the Authority to present the Plan more persuasively would have been of value in influencing first reactions. She considers that another month would have been sufficient for the Authority itself to recast the Plan in a minimally palatable form.

As published the Master Transportation Plan merely set out the assumptions, estimates and facts which had yet to be fought over. The introduction very briefly outlined the surveys on which the Plan was based. Part (ii) evaluated future problems, Part (iii) dealt with design considerations and Part (iv) set out the Plan. Working from the assumption that the Central Traffic District and the Central Industrial District (the two roughly bounded by Salisbury Street, Fitzgerald Avenue, Wordsworth Street and Hagley Park) were, and would continue to be, the major generators of traffic in the region, the Authority set out a roading scheme to serve the City in 1980 and beyond. And the Plan makes it clear that its roading proposals imply - for it does not set out - a complementary master vehicle parking scheme. (An estimated 18,000 off-street parking places would be required in 1980 compared with a total of 8,000 on and off-street parking places in 1959.) Just as the roading scheme is designed to be implemented in stages, so a programme of parking building construction must be planned to absorb the rising flood of vehicles carried by the developing road network. This combination of an adequate road network and matching parking facilities is the necessary

pre-requisite to the full use of the City centre amenities and services. In a fundamental sense the Plan is more than a roading plan but rather a plan for the optimum use, by an expanding regional population, of the facilities of the City centre. The private car happens to be the dominant mode of transport and the Plan sets out to provide means for its efficient use and its minimal nuisance when out of use.

A basic design consideration of the Plan was "the need to keep the Central Business District, which forms the inner part of the Central Traffic District, as free from traffic as possible".¹ Since the Plan as published was an Outline only it was quite appropriate that the detail of arrangements inside the proposed motorway box were not offered. Yet it is a major failure of the Outline Plan that it omitted to give some account of how the motorway system serving the city centre could be made compatible with the aim of preserving the street system "as free from traffic as possible".

In her second major Report to the Authority on 8th May 1962, Miss Northcroft said that "the solution to the traffic problems in the centre is the most difficult and

¹ Christchurch Master Transportation Plan p.16

complex which has to be faced." The Report went on:
 " It is one (problem) which cannot be completely divorced from the consideration of the overall network of urban routes, for the location of and in particular the points of entry to the centre of these routes, will affect the question of how and where traffic is distributed and collected in the centre and the location of such facilities as car parks and bus terminals."¹

As early as 27th June 1958, Mr. D. J. Edmondson, Deputy Regional Planner, had presented a report to the Traffic and Transport Sub-Committee outlining an approach to the problem of the layout of the City centre to complement an arterial roading plan. It advocated a "system of main vehicular thoroughfares as a super-grid within the framework of the present grid."² A report to the Authority's Technical Advisory Committee on 1st July 1958, gave the principles of design informing this scheme to be on the one hand, provision for vehicular movement within reasonable distance of any point, while at the same time pedestrians must be free to move about in "complete safety".³ Development of a super-grid to achieve these purposes involved the improvement of selected streets while remaining

¹ 8th May 1962 Report by Miss Northcroft to the Authority p.5

² Minutes Traffic and Transport, August 1956 - February 1964. p.227

³ Minutes of the Authority's Technical Advisory Committee 1955 - May 1959 p.222

streets would gradually be phased out as vehicular traffic routes and some at least would ultimately become pedestrian streets. In a later report to the Technical Advisory Committee Miss Northcroft warned that the problem of gaining rear access to buildings was the major barrier preventing the realisation of such a scheme for the segregation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.¹

Not only was the problem of layout broached early but some work was done in 1961-62 on the assignment of 1980 traffic to the city centre streets. This complex undertaking of assigning 1980 traffic to city centre destinations (based on the 1980 distribution of employment and city services) was undertaken as a guide to the positioning of motorway access points and the distribution of off-street car parking.² None of this information appeared in the published Outline with the result that the Authority laid itself open to the charge that it had been responsible for the preparation of a mere "roading plan" which threatened to destroy the very facilities it was designed to serve.

The Plan makes it clear (in Part (iii) Design Considerations) that the roading proposals which it makes

¹ Ibid p.285

² 8th May Report to the Authority by Miss Northcroft.

meet the different type and standard of facilities required by the different purposes of traffic. It compares the traffic capacity, purposes and destructiveness of three broad alternatives which are not mutually exclusive but which will be mixed in the Plan proposals as appropriate. The three categories are the widening of existing roads, the construction of new all-purpose roads and the construction of motorways. Each of the first two serve two functions - they carry traffic and they give access to adjoining property. Motorways perform only the one function of carrying traffic and they are designed to avoid any interruption in their traffic flow. In the Plan the motorway is a specialist road super-imposed on an inadequate street system to permit the continued functioning of a pattern of urban life becoming heavily dependent on the use of the private car. It is precisely because the private car is the chosen means of transport in a city of Christchurch's moderate size and circular spread that other forms of transport, notably an extended bus service, will not meet the population's transport needs.

The backbone of the Plan is a system of two motorways (the Northern and the Southern) linked by an elaborate interchange about three blocks South of the Railway Station.

This system's prime function is to serve as an urban motorway, and secondarily as a long-distance motorway. The Northern motorway from the vicinity of Chaney's Corner to Brougham Street is designed to relieve Papanui Road, Cranford Street and the Papanui Road/Bealey Avenue intersection. It passes close to the East side of the Central Traffic District and utilises the network of roads West of Fitzgerald Avenue as collector-distributors. This street network provides what is called a "tangential approach",¹ to the Central Traffic District. That is, it offers a number of alternative approaches to the city centre and has the effect of progressively breaking down the heavy traffic concentration from the motorway. The Southern motorway runs from the Main South Road beyond Templeton, to the junction with the Northern motorway. It passes South of the Railway Station so that it may serve the Central Industrial District as well as the Central Business District. Like the Northern motorway its prime purpose is to relieve overloaded radials : Lincoln Road, Blenheim Road and Riccarton Road. The Fendalton - Avonside motorway is designed to relieve congested intersections at Carlton Mill Bridge and

¹ Christchurch Master Transportation Plan
Diagram 1 p.19

Papanui Road/Bealey Avenue. Its essential purpose is to provide an alternative route to Bealey Avenue for traffic approaching the North of the City centre from the West, especially the Airport. Salisbury and Peterborough Streets as a one-way pair will act as collector-distributors. An important feature of the Plan is the extension of the tangential approach to the North-West and West approaches to the Central Traffic District. This would be achieved from the Fendalton - Avonside motorway itself. By connecting the Southern motorway with Rolleston Avenue via a bridge at the Antigua boatsheds so that traffic from the Southern motorway would have the option of approaching the City centre from the West, the Plan effectively encircled the Central Traffic District with major routes from which traffic would infiltrate.

The text of the Plan concludes with a brief discussion of economic considerations. It estimates that the cost of twenty miles of motorways (urban and rural) will be in the vicinity of £20 million. The cost of the other new roads and improvements would be additional to this estimate. It is pointed out, however, that the construction of the motorways avoids the alternative of widening the radials. Such an alternative the Plan argues, would fail for it would

have no reserve capacity at the end of the planning period. The motorway system is planned to have a significant reserve capacity beyond 1980 and additions to it beyond this time are allowed for.

In a sense any plan such as the Outline Master Transportation Plan intended as a basis for public discussion, is a liability to the planning process no matter how attractive or persuasive it appears. Such a plan has one significance for the technical experts who produce it and quite another for the lay audience which considers it. A plan is never a static thing but is a continuing process of development and adjustment. Because a lay audience shares no experience of this process a published plan appears fixed and finished. Though the authors of a plan may stress that their formal statement of it is only a single frame from a reel of film a plan published for public scrutiny inevitably appears a still. It specifies details, worst of all it shows proposals on a map which the layman is liable to consider firm decisions.

The Authority was now burdened with the defence of its proposals from the relatively inflexible ground which the Outline had established. The more elaborate justifications and fresh arguments which the Authority was now required

to give carried the unmistakeable taint of second thoughts, even of excuses. This is not to suggest that the Outline could possibly have anticipated and met every objection, it is simply that the Authority had now to put too many arguments which should have been in the Plan.

The Outline Plan was revealed to a meeting of local body and Government Department representatives and others closely concerned, at a special meeting on 10th September 1962. Large portions of the text and accompanying maps were published in both papers the following day. Mr. Bradhsaw's introductory remarks anticipated the two immediate criticisms: The problem of cost and the motorway route across North Hagley Park. As to the cost, an estimate of £50 million was "a piece of unintelligent guesswork" and he urged his audience to "expunge" that figure from their minds.¹ On the Hagley Park route he said that the Authority knew that many people "sincerely believed that Hagley Park should be preserved at all costs". However, "every conceivable alternative had been studied and tested, and cast out when it became unworkable, before it was decided to plan for a motorway through the Park".² Only two questions came from the audience and

¹ "Star" 11th September 1962.

² Ibid

one of these was put by Mr. H. J. Walker, M.P. for St. Albans, the assiduous local member who queried the siting of the route of the Northern motorway through his electorate. For the rest the audience were silent and the "Star" said in its editorial comment, "with good reason Christchurch people are entitled to feel startled by the City's Master Transportation Plan."¹

¹ Ibid

CHAPTER IVReactions to the Published Outline:September 1962 - March 1963

Both Christchurch papers were given a full account of the Outline Plan a week to ten days before it was published. They thus had ample time to consider the form of their editorial comment to be published on 11th September 1962, the day after the Plan was revealed to the public. While the 'Star' dwelt on the size and unfortunate implications of the Plan, the 'Press' reinforced the argument of the Plan itself without serious criticism or reservation. The 'Press' committed itself to wholehearted support of the Plan but the 'Star' restricted itself to the comment that "undoubtedly by 1980 something will be needed to avoid complete and utter congestion of the central area of Christchurch, so that it is wise to start planning now for some form of relief."

The 'Star' stressed that the Plan was liable to alteration before it was further developed and argued that sufficient time must be allowed for study of all its implications. Whereas the 'Star' stressed the effects of the Plan on existing interests, (both private and public property notably Hagley Park), the 'Press'

emphasised the necessity for the Plan and the benefits it would confer. Noting that the Plan proposals were "painstakingly prepared by a process of theoretical trial and error" the 'Press' commented that it was unlikely that the local authorities could improve on them.

Technical proposals such as the Master Transportation Plan can ultimately be tested and judged only in terms of the professional training of which they are a product. Newspaper leader writers like local body members must rely on the advice of technical experts. Since the Regional Planning Authority had a virtual monopoly of the experts it seemed that fundamental debate on the merits of the Plan was not possible. Only if there were a second and independent set of technical experts disputing the methods, assumptions and proposals of the Plan would the layman have a choice. From the beginning the 'Press' did not seek a choice. The 'Star' on the other hand had serious misgivings and awaited developments.

The layman, confronted with a plan of which he disapproves such as the Master Transportation Plan, but without rival groups of technical specialists offering

arguments between which he can choose, is in a frustrating position. The Authority, confident of the technical inviolability of its proposals to non-specialists found that the frustration engendered by the situation had unfortunate consequences. It helped to stimulate an emotional reaction to aspects of the Plan which could be readily exploited by those who eventually did offer 'alternatives'.

Correspondence in both papers following the publication of the Plan dealt almost exclusively with the route of the Fendalton-Avonside motorway across North Hagley Park. Preoccupation with this one aspect was so overwhelming that the 'Star' published letters not under the heading "the Traffic Plan" but simple the "Hagley Motorway". From 12th September 1962 to 20th October when correspondence on the subject was suspended in the 'Press', fourteen correspondents opposed the intrusion on the Park while four explicitly approved the route. In the period 12th September to 30th November when correspondence petered out in the 'Star', twenty six correspondents opposed the Park road while seven approved it. On one side R. D. Tranter in a letter published in the 'Star' on 16th October, called Hagley Park "the dead

heart of Christchurch and a block to progress" while Janet Kenny wrote: "This gradual destruction of our green spaces is unforgiveable. Without Hagley Park, Christchurch would be sordid."¹

The local body elections occurred just as this argument was developing but they hardly affected them. Individual candidates for the City Council, on both the Labour and Citizens' tickets, declared their opposition to the route across the Park. Councillor P. J. Skellerup (Citizens') declared his personal opposition to a road through Hagley Park and suggested that the Park road proposal might prove to be a red herring designed to draw fire from other proposals.² At least one other Citizens' candidate (R. H. Hammond) publicly stated his opposition with the statement: "If I am elected a motorway will run through Hagley Park over my dead body."³ A Labour Party candidate for the City Council, Mrs. Gertrude Cree, charged that the proposal was "the thin end of the wedge" and that Citizens' Councillors who represented the City on the Regional Planning Authority "had proved lacking in vision and too weak to say NO!"⁴ Councillor R. M. Macfarlane, challenged to state his

¹ 'Press' 18th September 1962.

² 'Star' 4th October 1962.

³ 'Star' 10th October 1962.

⁴ 'Press' 5th October 1962.

views, expressed opposition.¹

Yet waiting for a lead from the public rather than seeking to lead, the parties as bodies made no mention of the Plan as a party issue. In fact, after the Election a correspondent in the 'Star' queried Labour Party policy on the Hagley Park route. Miss Mabel Howard M.P., replying for the Party, stated that there had not been sufficient time before the Elections to work out policy on the issue.²

In the absence of a political division, firmer and more clearly opposed positions were being taken up by the two newspapers. On 19th November 1962, representatives of the Regional Planning Authority's constituent Councils met to approve in principle, a resolution charging the Authority with responsibility for continued development of the Plan. Commenting on this, the 'Press' confirmed its support for the Plan by urging that it be quickly proceeded with while the 'Star' endorsed the principle of "hastening slowly".³ This developing division of editorial opinion was helping to structure the debate on the Plan. It became an important factor in the development of more or less clearly defined lines of battle.

¹ 'Star' 6th October 1962.

² 'Star' 22nd October 1962.

³ 'Press' 24th November 1962, and 'Star' 20th November 1962.

Opposition to the Plan remained disorganised and unimpressive. It seemed that the Authority had only to wait until initial hostile reactions cooled. Yet the Authority did not welcome this state of affairs. At a meeting of the Authority on 6th November, Mr. Bradshaw deplored the fact that comments on the Plan so far received had been confined to one aspect. He went on to say that "there are many proposals affecting much property and the sights of the public generally and local bodies must be focussed on the Plan as a whole."¹ Preoccupation with the route of the Fendalton-Avonside motorway endangered the progress of the Plan because it made for argument in emotional terms with which the Authority was least able to cope. Paradoxically, the stimulus required to focus public attention on "the Plan as a whole" could only be provided by a body which was prepared to fight the Plan on the widest front and in the most dramatic way possible.

A request for an extension of the time allowed by the Regional Planning Authority for the submission of comments on the Plan marked the opening of an entirely new phase in the debate. This request was made in a letter to the Editor of the 'Press' over the names of

¹ 'Press' 7th November 1962.

Dr. P. S. Cook and Messrs. H. G. Royds and P. J. Beaven. However, it was not printed in the correspondence columns but in short article form and was referred to as a "joint statement on behalf of a group of citizens interested in studying the Plan."¹ On 12th November the 'Press' printed a letter in its correspondence columns from Dr. Cook protesting at the use made of the original letter which he charged, had been reworded, rearranged and given prominence as the statement of a group. This second letter does, however, admit to the existence of a group of twenty people attempting to study the Plan with only two copies to work from.²

Commenting on the request for the extension of time allowed for comments, the 'Press' indicated a very narrow estimate of the purpose for which the original period was conceded. It said that "the Authority, in giving the public until March 31st to make comments and suggestions is already going far beyond what the law requires. The Authority's real responsibility is only to the Constituent local bodies and to the Government." The Authority was merely "giving the public a chance to be heard before it finally approves the Plan for submission to its constituents."³ Yet it is hardly

¹ 'Press' 9th November 1962.

² The Outline was not published in any quantity till the end of December 1962

³ 'Press' 10th November 1962.

surprising that this commentator considered the period for comments merely as an opportunity for members of the public to talk out their misgivings with a tolerant Planning Authority. The extension of this opportunity into a full-scale contest between ostensibly equal opponents, the one attacking and the other defending the Plan, could hardly have been anticipated.

On 22nd December 1962, both papers carried an article on the formation of a group of professional men to examine the implications of the Plan. The conveners of the Group were Messrs. Beaven and Royds.¹ Some of the people contacted by Dr. Cook had already worked together in an organisation protesting the destruction of the scenic beauty of Lake Manapouri by a proposed hydro-electric scheme. Membership of the new group was not given but it was reported to include consulting engineers (Mr. Royds), architects (Mr. Beaven), accountants, university lecturers, quantity surveyors, doctors, teachers, and lecturers in art and design.²

The Group which adopted the name of the City Planning Study Group had already met Mr. D. J. Edmondson (the Deputy Regional Planner) and Mr. Suggate to have the Plan explained. Their preliminary comment on the Plan was

¹ Dr. Cook, who had taken the initiative in forming the Group, had shifted to Australia.

² 'Star' 22nd December 1962.

that "the Planners have produced a workable roading system, but the City wants more than a traffic plan alone."¹ This first statement of their views stressed their belief that traffic planning is only one aspect of town planning which, if an isolated project such as the Master Transportation Plan appeared to be, endangered a potential town plan as a whole. Town planning according to the Group is a "team endeavour" and the Regional Planning Authority team which produced the Plan less than adequate in this respect. A properly balanced town planning team included architects, engineers, sociologists, doctors, lawyers and landscape architects in addition to town planners and traffic engineers. The Group expressed its eagerness to supply these missing skills on some sort of informal consultative basis.²

But the City Planning Study Group anticipated another role when in this first statement it commented that "Although local bodies can still protest, the scheme is too big and too complex, and of too diverse implications for individual local bodies to materially alter it. It is this kind of gap which our group would welcome an opportunity to help to fill."³ Group objectives at

¹ 'Press' 22nd December 1962.

² Ibid

³ Ibid

this early stage were unclear. Some members, probably a minority, were bitterly opposed to any intrusion on Hagley Park. Messrs. Beaven and Royds who were the anchormen throughout were largely unconcerned at this aspect of the Plan. However, Group members were agreed on a minimal intention of forcing the Authority to reconsider the Plan; to re-think the entire problem in a broader context.

The Group's general intention was to "spur the professional jealousy of the Authority".¹ Messrs. Beaven and Royds as members of professions closely allied to town planning and traffic engineering (architecture and civil engineering respectively) were determined to enforce their claim to professional competence in planning matters. By stressing their professional kinship with the technical officers of the Authority they were demanding an equal right to be heard in any debate on the technical fundamentals of the Plan. Unlike the general public they would not be told that they must in the last analysis accept the results of a professional inquiry on faith. The Group were determined to fully open up a debate which the Authority assumed must necessarily remain half

¹ P. J. Beaven Interview.

closed, the decision going to the originators of the Plan by default.

Uncertain as to how best to achieve their aims, a delegation from the Group met Mr. George Burns, Editor of the 'Star' to discuss the problem. At his suggestion the Group began the preparation of a series of newspaper articles on the Plan. When the 'Press' was approached the Editor, Mr. Cant, was not enthusiastic but agreed that his paper would carry a similar series. Like Mr. Burns he stressed that contributors must not indulge in extravagant polemics.

In an editorial on 22nd January 1963 the 'Press' introduced the first in a series of five articles on the Plan by members of the City Planning Study Group. On 11th February the 'Star' printed the first of a separate series by Group members. In its editorial introduction the 'Press' made it clear that it did not necessarily agree with the content of these articles and warned that any proposals made would have to be carefully investigated before they could be considered. This leader writer touched on a grave weakness of the Group despite its claims to professional authority - the total lack of

resources with which to substantiate even a minor alteration to the official Plan. Any suggestion made would have to be evaluated by the Authority.

In both series the fifth and last article accompanied by a sketch plan, was the approved work of the Group as a whole. Each of the other eight was signed and represented a personal point of view. Mr. F. Tomlinson¹ and Mr. Gordon Troup² made highly partisan contributions to the 'Star' series. Mr. Tomlinson charged that the Plan ignored human and aesthetic values, that it was destructive of public and private property, and threatened "blighted areas", merely to achieve - at the cost of more than £40 million - better traffic flow. He also asked whether acceptance of the Plan meant "the building up of but another semi-government department with almost unlimited powers; the engagement of unknown overseas traffic engineers (devoid of local experience and traditions) to promote a highly contentious scheme, regardless of our wishes?"³

Mr. Troup was prepared to accept almost any proposal which obviated the necessity for intrusion on Hagley Park.⁴

¹ A quantity surveyor

² A University lecturer

³ 'Star' 11th February 1963.

⁴ 'Star' 12th February 1963.

H. G. Royds in his 'Press' article supplied an apparently plausible alternative. He proposed a large roundabout at the Carlton Bridge Corner with a capacity of 4,000 - 6,000 vehicles an hour, as a means of ironing out the bottleneck. An improved Park Terrace would offer alternative approach routes to the City Centre to relieve the Bealey Avenue intersections.¹ This proposal became Group policy in preference to an unlikely alternative suggested by Arthur Lush in his 'Star' article. He envisaged a new route from the Fendalton Road railway crossing to the vicinity of the Salisbury Street/Manchester Street junction.²

H. G. Royds' general criticism of the motorway routes and the assumptions on which they were based also went into Group policy. He questioned the Authority's estimates of traffic growth. These were based on "American practice" which he denied was applicable to New Zealand where the import of motor vehicles fluctuated with the level of the country's overseas earnings. Mr. Royds also argued that motorways are designed mainly to carry heavy private car volumes at peak periods.

¹ 'Press' 24th January 1963.

² 'Star' 13th February 1963.

Pursuing this narrow analysis of their purpose he estimated that in 1980 less than 1% of the population would benefit from the motorways for only a few minutes each day.¹

Of less importance as a source of debating material was an examination of the motorway routes, the fourth article in the 'Press' series by G. L. Evans and Bill Lovell-Smith.² They conceded that it would be hard to find less destructive alternatives to the tentative motorway routes shown in the Plan. But the article did question the necessity for the Fendalton-Avonside motorway on the basis of the Authority's own traffic estimates.³ The Fendalton-Avonside motorway is distinguished from the Northern and Southern motorways by being a short section built into, and confined at either end, by low efficiency streets. These circumstances, the authors of the article argued, largely nullify the advantage of the motorway's high efficiency.

The exception among the eight signed articles was Mr. Tomlinson's contribution to the 'Press' series, for unlike the other seven including his own in the 'Star'

¹ 'Press' 24th January 1963.

² 'Press' 26th January 1963.

³ Professor Buchanan in his 1966 report noted that the motorway was barely justified on 1980 figures 'Planning in Christchurch: A review' Colin Buchanan and Partners. p.40

he implicitly rejected the basic assumption on which the Plan is based - that provision must be made for the full use of the private car. Mr. Tomlinson saw the plan as a scheme to swamp the City Centre in a rapidly increasing vehicle population. Far from believing the estimates of traffic growth to be excessive he reckoned them to be conservative. His conclusion was that the Authority should plan a public transport system instead.¹

The two most important articles which supplemented the real concerns of the Group as expressed by the two statements by the Group as a whole, were by the architects P. J. Beaven and G. W. Lucking. Mr. Beaven, opening the 'Press' series, expressed the basic assumption of the Group with the statement that "the Plan as announced is a first stage traffic engineers functional analysis only." He argued that the Plan threatened to become an alien and destructive imposition on the City. This would be avoided if it were re-worked and properly assimilated into a comprehensive town plan.

In the fourth article of the 'Star' series Mr. Lucking developed this argument with a fresh emphasis.³ He

¹ 'Press' 31st January 1963.

² 'Press' 22nd January 1963.

³ 'Star' 14th February 1963.

argued that the Plan as it stood served merely as a frame on which an imaginative plan for the City's development might be hung. Both Mr. Lucking and Mr. Beaver emphasised the danger of treating the Master Transportation Plan as an end in itself. Isolated as a plan designed merely to move traffic efficiently, not seriously disciplined by other considerations, such as the effect of its proposals on the human environment, the Plan promised to be excessively destructive for the achievement of its narrow purpose.

In his article Mr. Lucking introduced the concept of precinct planning,¹ of the central area as the complement to the Authority's motorway proposals. The precinct, Mr. Lucking emphasised, is essentially a pedestrian area. The motorways and their collector-distributors bring bulk traffic only to the fringe of the precinct where parking buildings absorb it. Mr. Lucking envisaged a number of precincts grouped around the central business precinct itself: a cultural precinct between the River and Rolleston Avenue, and a residential precinct to the North East. Instead of a

¹ The term precinct is used here and in the debate generally in a loose sense to indicate an area from which through traffic is excluded. The term properly refers to areas "of homogeneous use" around and between which - but not within - the motors circulate". Colin Buchanan : Mixed Blessing; the Motor in Britain. p.166

mesh of streets all equally subject to the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, he proposed a specialisation of function, with bulk traffic concentrated on specialist roads which enclosed areas given over to the pedestrian.¹

The final articles in each series, endorsed by the Group as a whole, perform two separate functions.² First, they detail the Group's real concern that the Plan might prove a dangerously narrow scheme having unnecessarily destructive effects, especially in the central City. Secondly, these articles each set of which was accompanied by a sketch plan of the central area, put alternative motorway proposals to those of the Plan. The sketch plan published in the 'Press' on 15th February 1963 eliminated the Fendalton-Avonside motorway and upgraded Harper Avenue with a large roundabout at Carlton Corner in its stead. It also pushed the Northern motorway East on to the line of Fitzgerald Avenue and the Southern motorway was shown further South of the Railway Station to meet Mr. Beaven's objection that, as shown in the Plan, it strikes through the middle of the Sydenham

¹ Note the similarity of these proposals with unpublished Authority material discussed in Chapter III. Mr. Lucking's precinct proposals also anticipated Professor Buchanan's environmental areas.

² 'Press' 15th February 1963 and Star 27th February 1963.

industrial district. Traffic would infiltrate the City from the motorway and the six lane ring road into which the three remaining avenues were converted. With the motorways either outside, or running down the Belt in the case of Fitzgerald Avenue, the street pattern was radically reorganised so that the existing continuous grid system was drastically reduced to a few collector roads. Many existing street connections were broken to create cul-de-sac streets.

The sketch map accompanying the last 'Star' article published on 27th February abandoned the separate route of the Northern-Southern motorway and proposed instead the use of Moorhouse and Fitzgerald Avenues. The motorways would run down the centre of the two avenues on narrow prestressed concrete columns, leaving the avenues to continue to perform their role as distributor roads. This radical proposal to re-site the motorways in their central city sections did not imply a wholesale rejection of the Plan by the Group. Despite apparent evidence to the contrary the Group was not vitally concerned about the siting of the motorways, the principle of which it approved. Having previously eliminated the Fendalton-Avonside motorway the Group now sought to increase the controversy provoking value of ~~their~~^{its} 'plan' by seeming to reject even the backbone of the Plan, the Northern and Southern motorways.¹

¹ A prominent Group member told the author that all the alternative plans offered by the Group were "nonsense".

The Group at this time was not primarily concerned with the relative merits of alternative motorway routes, but with the problem of dealing with the traffic coming off the motorways wherever they were sited. The Group was ready to exploit public sentiment against any intrusion on Hagley Park, and they were equally prepared to dramatise their differences with the Authority by playing fast and loose with the remaining motorway proposals of the Plan. The Group wished to stimulate the maximum possible public debate which would force not only a reconsideration and fresh justification of the Plan's roading proposals but compel a full statement of precisely how the central City was to be planned in response to the radically new conditions which would be created by the motorways.

The Group's real complaint against the Plan was that it did not complement its roading proposals with some account of how the City Centre was to be planned. In their final 'Press' article the Group asked for a detailed study of the activities in the City Centre and of how these might be planned under the new conditions which the motorways would create. The Group's 'Star'

article attempted a brief account of how traffic would use the motorways or ring roads to approach a destination inside a precinct area. Since a direct route taken across one or more precincts would be very difficult, perhaps even impossible due to the drastic rearrangement of the street system, most journeys would involve an oblique approach by motorway or ring road before striking into the desired precinct.

Commenting on the Group's proposals Mr. C. B. Millar, newly appointed Director of Planning at the Authority, warned against the too radical advocacy of arrangements favouring the pedestrian at the expense of the convenient movement of vehicles. On the other hand he acknowledged the timidity of the Plan in this respect.¹ These general comments on the Group articles typify Mr. Millar's approach to the problem of dealing with criticism. By minimising the differences between the Group's proposals and those of the Plan and emphasising the Group's approval of the principles of the Plan he sought to reduce the level of controversy. Despite their best efforts to inflate their differences with the Authority

¹ 'Press' 16th February 1963.

the Group's investigations and proposals were represented as confirmation of the soundness of the Plan. In an editorial published on the eve of the first full consideration of the Plan by the City Council the 'Press' too, minimised the differences between the Authority and the Group proposals. It said, "But the real lessons from the Group's examination are that no easy solution of the traffic problems is possible."¹ It implied that by toying with the Authority's proposals the Group had actually advanced the cause of the Plan by demonstrating the near impossibility of discarding its essential features.

Despite the attempt to smother it in the embrace of the Authority the Group was a small and determinedly critical body which wanted the Master Transportation Plan modified or stopped. They did not advertise their membership (though the 'Star' reported on 27th February 1963 that the Group numbered fifteen) and did not welcome Mr. Millar's suggestion, endorsed by the 'Press', that they might broaden their membership and objectives to become a town planning association. They were informally

¹ 'Press' 19th February 1963.

organised and after this initial burst of activity the Group was reduced to an effective core of about five members led by Messrs. Beaven and Royds. The Group chose a narrow and essentially destructive role which they believed could be best performed by a body such as they then constituted.

When the Institute of Engineers (Canterbury Branch) discussed the Plan on 25th March 1963, an informal debate between representatives of the Authority and the Group developed. Each side revealed the strength and weaknesses of its position in the contest for the Plan. The Authority was tied to its Plan proposals and could only reiterate and explain, and at most modify slightly in the face of criticism. The Group on the other hand could offer blanket criticisms and seemingly plausible alternatives. Mr. Beaven argued that the Plan, by facilitating traffic flow, would create traffic conditions in the City Centre which would always outstrip the measures designed to deal with them. Mr. Royds offered the suggestion that the problem of an inadequate street system could be overcome merely by spreading peak hour traffic. The costs of the Plan were repeated - 430

houses and 1,700 people moved.¹ To avoid this and to spread peak hour traffic Mr. Royds recommended faster traffic flow and better public transport.

But the Authority held the initiative with its Published Outline which the Group had the task of discrediting. It might be extremely difficult to refute criticism convincingly but it was equally difficult to make criticism 'stick', especially the very general criticism offered by Messrs. Beaven and Royds. The Group having exploited the tactic of sweeping criticism for maximum effect then found it impossible to sustain these criticisms in close argument.

Meanwhile the Authority were modifying their proposals so as to make themselves less vulnerable in debate. They were having second thoughts about the wisdom of treating the Fendalton-Avonside motorway as if it were no more significant than any other part of the Plan. The Authority was now seeking some means of softening a proposal which had appeared in the Outline Plan in a most provocative form. At the New Zealand Geographical Society meeting Mr. Edmondson suggested that the motorway might parallel Harper Avenue from Fendalton

¹ Group estimates

Road to the 'elbow' and from there strike across the Park to Park Terrace. Commenting on this modification at the Institute of Engineers panel discussion, Mr. Royds claimed that it would not be sufficient and that any intrusion whatsoever would be resisted by popular opinion. Having once provoked such a violent reaction nothing short of the abandonment of the Park route would satisfy the objectors and the Authority was condemned to fight throughout against a resistance which hinged on the Park route protest.

Chapter V

Modifications to the Outline Plan: the Debate Continues

On 31st March 1963, the period allowed for the submission of comments on the Plan to the Authority ended, and the debate went into recess while the Authority made fresh dispositions for the final contest. Editorial comment in both papers¹ marking the close of the first round of the debate anticipated the Authority's problem (or opportunity) of just how to recast its proposals in the light of criticism.

The two papers argued from opposed premises. According to the 'Star' the Outline Plan published in September 1962 was a provisional plan designed to test public opinion. Therefore it followed that the eighty objections received by the Authority on the subject of the Hagley Park route constituted sufficient evidence of public opinion to justify the re-siting of that section of the motorway. Objections to the passage of Madras St. through Latimer Square would be valid for the same reason. The following morning the 'Press' carried on editorial which was clearly intended as a rebuttal. It

¹ 'Star' 2nd April 1963, and 'Press' 3rd April 1963.

allowed the comments received by the Authority to be of only very limited significance, merely that "the planners will have some information on the public's reactions when they settle down to detailed work."¹ The editorial asserted that adverse comment on the Plan would necessarily be unrepresentative because the majority of the public would not be directly affected and therefore would express no opinion. Far from believing that the period allowed for comments was a period of democratic amendment the 'Press' believed the months of debate served to bring the objectors closer to the Plan proposals. This is a re-statement of the idea that debate, and even the persistence of objections, actually contribute to the eventual acceptance of the Plan by demonstrating its virtual inviolability to criticism. The editorial cited Councillor P. J. Skellerup as a persistent critic of the Plan who by that date (April 1963) had at least accepted the principle of the Plan by agreeing to the conversion of Harper Avenue into an eight lane highway.

In the event the Authority dealt with comment and criticism in a Report of some fifty foolscap pages.² Mr. Bradshaw pointed out when he introduced the Report

¹ 'Press' 3rd April 1963.

² Christchurch Regional Planning Authority: A Report on Comments Received by the Authority on the Christchurch Master Transportation Plan hereafter referred to as the 'Report on Comments'

on Comments to the Authority that although the Authority had given full consideration to the objections of all interested parties it had a responsibility to the whole community to devise and press for what it considered to be the best solution.¹

The Report on Comments must be read in conjunction with, and as a gloss on, the Outline Plan. As a supplement to the Outline the Report performed two general functions. Firstly it was an expansion on, and a defence of, those aspects of the Outline Plan which were questioned. Secondly it detailed certain modifications to the Outline and thus implicitly documented the grave shortcomings of the Outline as a basis for discussion. Indeed it represented a significant extension of the Authority's intention when it adopted the Plan in principle and submitted it to its constituent Councils "as a basis for discussion".² For up to this time the possibility that the public might become an effective influence on the planning process had not been seriously considered by the Authority and now it was making modifications in the light of these criticisms.

¹ 'Star' 7th April, 1963.

² 'Press' report of the Authority meeting adopting the Outline Plan. 5th September, 1962.

The Report on Comments attempts a fresh justification of the concept of the Plan in response to a series of comments on the Plan's assumptions by the City Planning Study Group. The Group offered two separate comments on the attempt to plan for increasing numbers of private cars. In the first place it regarded the 1980 estimate of vehicle registrations as excessive, arguing that the country's fluctuating export earnings would not permit the purchase of vehicles in such numbers. In answer the Report argued that the Outline Plan's estimate of a 4% yearly increase in vehicle numbers was a yearly average increase which had already been exceeded on critical parts of the road network.¹

Secondly, the Group considered that the Outline Plan instead of planning facilities primarily for the use of private cars might have planned to divert the increasing numbers of car owners to public transport services for journeys to and from the City Centre. The Report considered two possible methods of achieving this both of which it rejected. It considered that restrictions on the entry of cars into the City Centre as a means of diverting their occupants to public trans-

¹Between 1959 and 1963 a growth rate of 6% per annum was recorded on the radials approaching the belts.

port would be more likely to result in the transfer of much central area activity to the suburbs. Alternatively, any attempt to solve the traffic problem by offering an improved public transport system as a freely chosen option could not be relied upon to achieve its object. A suggestion from another correspondent for free public transport¹ was considered to involve vast expenditure without any certainty that it would induce the majority of car owners to switch to public transport. And to free 1964 bus travel of any charge would not have been enough to make it a competitive option. An extension of routes and a much greater frequency of service would be required. According to the Report: "All the major works contemplated in the Master Transportation Plan would be necessary for the efficient movement of a larger transport fleet." The Report concluded that the annual cost of such an improved service was "likely to be at least equal if not greater than the annual cost of the major works of the Master Transportation Plan."² These arguments for the practical necessity of planning a road network for increasing numbers of private cars make explicit what was largely taken for granted in the

¹ Dealt with elsewhere in the Report at p.38

² Report on Comments p.39

published Outline which merely noted that: "From trends over the last twenty years it is expected that, in the next twenty years, public passenger transport will not be able to make any additional contribution in the transport scene and, relatively, could lose ground."¹

A notable failure of the Report, however, was its inadequate reply to the Study Group's expression of serious misgivings about the future of the City Centre. The Report disclaimed any responsibility for the detailed planning of the central City. It stated that this would be a task for the City Council at a later stage. Nevertheless this detailed planning problem was claimed to have been kept in mind throughout the preparation of the Outline Plan. The Report stated that the function of a motorway serving a city centre is "to discharge vehicles as close as possible to their destination having regard to distribution and dispersal within the area concerned."² The Report asserted that the motorways bringing traffic to the fringes of the City centre are designed to be complemented by precinct planning. The Report commented that sketch maps by the Study Group of the central City area, showing a radical reorganisation of the street

¹ 'Christchurch Master Transportation Plan,' p.11

² Report on Comments p.32

system, might be too drastic. If many streets were closed those remaining open would have to be widened. However, the Authority failed in not producing a tentative plan for the City centre, perhaps in conjunction with City Council technical staff. Very general verbal reassurances were not enough to overcome the fears of the Study Group.

The Report argued that not only is the siting of the motorways close to the City centre compatible with precinct development but is essential if the purpose for which the motorways are designed is not to be nullified. High efficiency motorways sited on the Belts and linked with the City centre by low efficiency streets would be of little value. The Report rejected the Group's suggestion that the motorways as sited in the Outline Plan would crowd the City centre and allow too little room for development. It argued that central City areas do not expand horizontally in direct relationship to population growth and insisted that there is more than adequate room for development inside the motorways. The Report also dismissed the Group's criticism that the Fendalton-Avonside motorway bisects a potential high

density residential area, by pointing out that in fact the motorway would for most of its length mark the edge of the residential area.

The Report rejected, for technical reasons, the Group's suggestion that the motorways should run on the Belts. It argued that the Belts and the motorways superimposed on them would not be capable of carrying the through and turning traffic estimated for 1980. Unfortunately the Report did not make it clear why this should be the case though it seemed to indicate that the motorway traffic would have to be distributed from the Belts and that it is here that critical overloading would occur.

Having listed its objections and comments in its submission to the Authority, the Group threw in as an extra its opinion that immediate adoption of the Plan was not necessary given present traffic conditions. In reply the Report argued that the Plan should be adopted as soon as possible so that Councils could control development which would otherwise conflict with the Plan. Early agreement would also permit early construction before traffic conditions became intolerable.

It maintained that there was no necessity for delay on the grounds that the Plan was not a properly integrated component of a comprehensive town plan. It asserted that these wider considerations, such as the effect of traffic on environment, were kept under review throughout the development of the Plan.

The Report on Comments formally registered two significant modifications to the Outline Plan. It modified the Durham Street distributor to accommodate the Town Hall site. More important, the Report systematically worked out for the first time the argument for the Fendalton-Avonside motorway, an argument which had appeared only in short point form in the Outline Plan. By reviewing the present and future traffic pattern to the West of the City centre the Report put a convincing case for a motorway from the end of Fendalton Road to Salisbury Street and beyond. It demonstrated that the problem of overloaded intersections at Carlton Mill Bridge and Papanui Road/Bealey Avenue necessitated a second East-West route for access to the Northern City centre. Drawing traffic not only from Fendalton Road but also from Blenheim Road and Riccarton Road the motorway

would relieve Bealey Avenue of all that traffic now passing onto it at the critical Carlton Mill intersection.

The Report went on to discuss possible variations of that part of the Fendalton-Avonside motorway which appeared as a straight line across North Hagley Park in the Outline Plan. The Report acknowledged the Authority's error in showing the motorway in this form without comment and without emphasising that the line merely indicated a need for a first class road in the vicinity. In discussion at the Authority on how best to present this section of the motorway in the revised Plan, Mr. C. B. Millar argued that it ought to be indicated without any connection between Fendalton Road and Park Terrace, leaving the City Council to make good the omission at the detailed design stage.¹ This recommendation was not taken up but the Report on Comments did seem to offer alternatives. Detailed studies following the publication of the Outline in 1962 had revealed that Harper Avenue would not be required in addition to the motorway. Accordingly, the Report suggested either that Harper Avenue should be returned to the Park and the motorway built on a direct line as shown in the Outline or, that the motorway be

¹ Interview.

built on the line of Harper Avenue as far as the 'elbow' from where it would strike across the Northern corner of the Park. Maps subsequently published by the Authority adopted the second alternative.

In the concluding section of the Report which takes the form of a cost-benefit analysis of the Plan, it was stated that the Plan "may not be ideal but it is a balanced and co-ordinated Plan matched to the future needs of Christchurch."¹ The Report argued that the Plan's real value to the City would be immeasurable for it proposes the means to make access to the City centre possible when it would otherwise be impossible. If constructed as planned within the twenty year period it would check on otherwise inevitable tendency to costly decentralisation. The Report compared, in some detail, the benefits of long term planning with the benefits of a policy of isolated responses to obvious needs. By arguing that such a policy of piecemeal solutions might only have the effect of transferring a difficulty from one point to another, it made long term planning appear not an alternative but a necessity. Seen in this light the comparison of estimated costs is merely a demonstration piece. At

¹ Report on Comments p.40

a cost of £6 million more over the twenty year period (the difference between £43 million and £37 million at 1962/63 prices) the Plan is guaranteed to return a predictable and desired result as against an unknown but almost certainly inadequate street system at the end of the same period.

In an editorial on the morning following the adoption of the Report on Comments (8th April, 1964) the 'Press' welcomed the re-working of the argument for the Plan. By re-testing some of its data and arguing its assumptions and proposals afresh, it seemed that the Authority was neutralising opposition to its Plan by slowly eroding grounds for resistance. Yet it was failing to deal with the key issue raised by its critics. By insisting that the Plan was merely an outline transportation plan and refusing to offer even a tentative scheme of City centre arrangements, the Authority failed to come to grips with the political problem facing it. The Authority failed to isolate this vital area of disagreement or misunderstanding between itself and the Study Group and then to set about the business of eliminating it. It was quite true that the City Council would ultimately be responsible

for the design of the City centre but if concern for this question was a major obstacle to acceptance of the Plan it ought to have been faced and dealt with. The Authority seems not to have been fully aware of the political nature of the problem. The existence of an opposition Group claiming technical authority was virtually the pre-condition for effective opposition to the Plan in the City Council - it supplied the technical criticisms and alternatives. The Authority failed to make an adequate attempt to diminish the Group's very real misgivings and therefore their opposition to the Plan.

In an article under Mr. Beaven's name published in the 'Star' on 4th May, 1964, the Group gave notice that the Report on Comments had in no way satisfied them.¹ Miss Northcroft who was now in private practice in the City, volunteered a reply to this article but it was declined by Mr. Burns the Editor of the 'Star' as unsuitable to appear on the Leader page because of its partisan nature. Rather than have it relegated to a less conspicuous space where it would not be read, Miss Northcroft re-cast it in a form which omitted any mention of Mr. Beaven's article. A major point of the article

¹ This article is notable for the way in which the Authority's cost estimates were misrepresented. It was asserted that the Authority intended to spend in a twenty year period £46million (probably more) on elevated concrete motorways in the metropolitan area. In fact the motorway component of the Plan was estimated at £20million. Report on Comments, p.44. The £46million figure was the estimated cost of all roading expenditure in a twenty year period.

was that the Outline Plan was designed with "the motor-ways and other major routes located to facilitate the development of precincts" but that these arrangements were not shown because their design awaited the detailed planning stage.¹

This assurance became more inadequate when the Study Group secured a copy of the Buchanan Report.² This Report sets out to investigate the impact of increasing numbers of vehicles on urban areas and seeks the basis of an arrangement of access and facilities which would permit the use of large numbers of vehicles, while at the same time preserving adequate living conditions in towns. Mr. H. G. Royds has acknowledged that not until the Buchanan Report became available did the Group have the material for an authoritative critique of the Plan. According to Mr. Royds the Group had always known that the Plan was unsatisfactory because it "allowed traffic to dominate" but that it was Prof. Buchanan's exposition of the conflict between accessibility and environment - between the vehicles and the facilities they served - which enabled the Group to fully appreciate and therefore more effectively combat a Plan which it believed sacrificed

¹ 'Star' 21st May 1964.

² The Report of a working Group appointed by the United Kingdom Minister of Transport in 1961 and published by H.M.S.O. in 1963 under the title 'Traffic in Towns'. It is commonly known as the Buchanan Report after C.D. Buchanan who led the Working Group.

environment to accessibility.¹

In a letter published in article form by the 'Star' on 27th May 1964, the Group argued that the Plan had been rendered out of date by the Buchanan Report. The Group noted that the basic assumption of the Report is that in the conflict between traffic and facilities (or environment) the environmental standards chosen for any area will determine the amount and type of traffic it can accommodate. The statement went on to say that "it may be that a proper study on the lines of the Buchanan Report would show that our six lane Belts are capable, with improvements, to handle all the traffic which it is desirable to bring into the City,"²

This was almost certainly the most significant and valid criticism ever brought against the Master Transportation Plan. In the light of the convincing analysis of the Buchanan Report it is not enough that the motorways and other major routes of the Plan should have been planned with something like the network and environmental area concept in mind. The Buchanan Report argues that "in most cases the network would be designed to suit the capacity of the (environmental) areas just as a water pipe

¹ Mr. H. G. Royds in a letter to Councillor P.J. Skellerup dated 25th February, 1966.

² 'Star' 27th May, 1964.

is designed to suit the cistern it serves."¹ Merely to plan a network within which a number of environmental areas are assumed is to leave the fundamental objective of environmental conditions to chance. In terms of Professor Buchanan's analysis the planning of the environmental areas, and the application of environmental standards to them, cannot wait to the detailed design stage but must necessarily be the first step in the planning process.

In an editorial on 20th June 1964, the 'Press' in a discussion of the Buchanan Report claimed that "exactly the same principles were applied in Christchurch as in the study of several English urban areas."² In a letter to the 'Press' on 24th June the Group disagreed stating that "The Christchurch Plan differs because it pre-supposes the full use of the car in the central area without any assessment of its effect on environment". In a wholly unconvincing editorial reply the 'Press' failed to deal with this crucial point of the reversal of the traffic planning process. It quite erroneously claimed that "the basic standpoint of their study (the Buchanan Report) was to see how the best use of motor vehicles could be

¹ Traffic in Towns p.42

² Presumably the editorial refers to the "practical studies" of the Buchanan Report.

achieved and how present traffic difficulties could be overcome."¹ Certainly the Buchanan Report seeks to provide for the best use of motor vehicles but with the vital qualification that the number and type of vehicles using an environmental area will always be ~~determined~~ ^{determined} by the "environmental capacity" of the area as distinct from its "crude capacity".² On the other hand the Report makes it clear that though an environmental area has a definable environmental capacity as it stands, the environmental capacity can be increased by the re-arrangement of buildings and access ways.

The Authority did not reply to this fundamental criticism of its method because it was not pressed to do so. The Study Group only stated the deficiency of the Plan as a scheme to facilitate traffic movement in general terms without emphasising the complete reversal in method in the design of a road network, advocated by the Buchanan Report.

Throughout the middle months of 1964 the amended Outline Plan was being considered by various City Council Committees in preparation for the critical meeting of the full Council required to give or withhold its

1 'Press' 24th June 1964.

2 'Traffic in Towns' p.50

specific approval of the Plan. As part of its campaign to influence this decision the Group organised on Saturday, 11th July, a public forum chaired by the Deputy-Mayor Mr. H. P. Smith. On the previous day the 'Star' carried a statement by the Group inviting the public to use the opportunity to decide on those aspects of the City's environment which ought to be considered in the preparation of any traffic plan.

The 'Press' reported that at times there were 150 people at the public forum but a correspondent of that paper who did not sympathise with the critical purpose of the meeting, characterised it as having an "emotionally charged atmosphere" and declared it to be dominated by "the Fendalton element".¹ A demonstration motion protesting any infringement of Hagley Park was carried without dissent. Mr. Gordon Troup proposed that the principle of limiting central area traffic as the only sure method of preserving an adequate environment, should be endorsed by the meeting. A discussion on the use of the Belts to carry the motorways revealed a significant difference of opinion. Mr. F. M. Warren a Christchurch architect argued that far from cramping the City centre as some speakers suggested, the motorways as shown on the

¹ Observer in the 'Press' 13th July, 1964.

official Plan would allow more than adequate room for development.¹

At a second forum on Saturday, 22nd August, a project (already approved by the City Council) for a bridge linking Antigua Street with Rolleston Avenue, was discussed. The meeting, with only two dissenting, asked the Council to reconsider its decision.² The Group had already, on 5th August, sent a deputation to the City Council Works Committee protesting against the proposal and had been asked to supply an alternative. This was done and the alternative plan of the area, drawn by H. A. Montgomery, a university lecturer³ was published on the eve of the second forum. In the accompanying article Mr. Montgomery acknowledged the validity of the purpose of the Antigua Street/Rolleston Avenue route, stated in a report issued by the City Engineer on 24th September to be, to "provide an alternative distributing route to the City centre from the South."⁴ As an alternative to the use of Rolleston Avenue the Group proposed the use of Montreal Street, which bisects the so-called river precinct between the Botanic Gardens and the River. . The Group's principal objection to the use

¹ 'Press' 13th July 1964 .

² 'Press' 24th August 1964 .

³ Mr. Montgomery a prominent member of the Group from mid 1963 onwards was principally interested in this aspect of the Plan.

⁴ The route was shown on the 1962 Outline Plan without comment.

of Rolleston Avenue was that the heavy traffic flow it would carry would be incompatible with the Avenue's primary function as a means of access to the Museum, the Botanic Gardens, Christ's College and the University. Knowing that they could not sustain a case against the claimed need for a "distributing route" the Group offered as an alternative Montreal Street, the very road which if developed as suggested would have severed an area generally considered as a unit.¹ In this case the Group offered an alternative more destructive than the proposal it rejected not because it preferred one to the other for some peculiar reason but because it was prepared to offer an alternative, any alternative which would gain time and force a reconsideration of the problem.²

By early September some supporters of Plan feared for its future. Newspaper correspondence, the only indication of public opinion, was running heavily against the Plan. An important function of the first forum was to provoke a fresh spate of letters to both newspapers. Between the middle of July and the end of December 1964 over 140 letters in both papers discussed the Plan on a much wider front than those which were overwhelmingly

¹ The City Engineer's report of 24th September rejected Montreal Street for this reason.

² Interview.

concerned with the intrusion on Hagley Park when the Plan was published in 1962. On 12th October the 'Press', in an attempt to stop the rot, introduced the first of a series of seven articles which would, it hoped, "help to guide the public to a proper understanding of the subject."

These articles were solicited "in the belief that ... the great majority of our responsible and thoughtful citizens - recognise the Master Transportation Plan to be in its main essentials both necessary and well-considered."

In a letter to Gordon Tait one of the contributors to the series, Mr. A. R. Cant editor of the 'Press' was rather more explicit. There was, he said, "now a very real danger of the Plan's being rejected by the City Council and perhaps of its eventually being abandoned."¹

These articles represent a belated effort by supporters of the Plan outside the Regional Planning Authority, to do what the Authority could not do for itself - win public confidence in its competence and in its proposals.

The 'Press' provided contributors with clerical and journalistic help while the Authority provided factual and diagrammatic material. No contributor advanced any significant new argument in favour of the Plan. Their

¹ Letter dated 10th September 1964.

task, in the words of the Editor, was merely "for some responsible people to say that the planners are not acting irresponsibly".¹ Three university professors (R. J. Rastrick, John Simpson and A. J. Danks); two architects (Paul Pascoe and F. M. Warren); and two well-known businessmen (R. H. Ballantyne and Gordon Tait) carried the requisite authority for that task and under them names most of the familiar arguments for the Plan were rehearsed. The City Planning Study Group approached Mr. Cant with the offer of a series of articles in reply. They were refused on the ground that they "had had their say".²

The final article in the series by the architect F. M. Warren whilst approving the Plan, recalled the circumstances in which the Authority was required at short notice to draw together its work up to mid-1962 to publish a Plan. He suggested that 'plan' was a misleading word to describe what was in fact only "a diagram illustrating the basic conception"³ and that the Authority had been handicapped thereafter defending this basic diagram which the public treated as a finished plan. When the public demanded details of routes and the form

¹ Ibid.

² Interview

³ 'Press' 28th October 1964.

of motorways they were told that such things could not be determined till the detailed design stage. Elsewhere¹ Mr. Warren has argued that the failure of the Authority to offer what he called "creative possibilities" left the bald proposals of the Outline Plan to appear negative and destructive. In his 'Press' article he conceded that such a task was beyond the resources of the Authority with their tiny staff and small budget.

As the 'Press' pointed out when it commented on the comparative failure of the Authority's public relations, the City Council was in a certain sense to blame.² It had left the Authority too long performing a task for which it was not equipped. Under-staffed and working on other projects it did not have the time to devote to arguing for the Plan. Indeed, such a complex and demanding responsibility could never have been envisaged for it. Until mid-1962 the Authority had worked on the unquestioned assumption that the Plan it was preparing would not be revealed until it had reached the detailed design stage by which time the Authority's constituent Councils would have been long committed to it. The decision to publish a half finished plan at short

¹ 'Town Planning Quarterly' June 1963.

² 'Press' 28th October 1964.

notice involved the Authority in a novel exercise for which it was totally unprepared. It prejudiced its task from the outset by showing the Fendalton-Avonside motorway as a blatant straight line across North Hagley Park, a self-inflicted handicap the serious effects of which it was never able to overcome.

CHAPTER VIThe City Council and The Plan:
September 1962 - December 1964

The Regional Planning Authority sought approval for the Master Transportation Plan from all six of its constituent Councils. The granting of this approval was not especially difficult for the five outlying Councils. Two (Riccarton and Heathcote) were not directly affected by the motorway proposals. However, the Southern motorway passes through the North corner of Halswell County and on into Paparua County to meet the Main South Road beyond Templeton. From the Waimakariri River to the City boundary the Northern motorway runs through Waimari County. Yet from the beginning the only decision of any significance was that to be made by the overwhelmingly preponderant local body, the City Council.

As a political problem the Master Transportation Plan was to some extent typical of the problems of City Council development projects, representing a cost on Council income and affecting existing interests. However, it was distinguished by being unusually extensive and disruptive. Local body politics in Christchurch are characterised by a comparatively intimate relationship between electors and elected.¹ This factor coupled with the Plan's other

¹ See G. Cheyne 'Christchurch - The Men Who Govern'
p.43

characteristics meant that it was a peculiarly difficult problem for City Councillors. Little wonder that the City Council was "shocked"¹ when the Plan was published in September 1962.

Because the City Council never gained the political confidence necessary to deal with the Plan decisively, the process of decision was hesitant, piecemeal and repetitive. It required, but did not always get, the exercise of patience and tact by the Regional Planning Authority and the skilful advocacy of the Plan by two successive City Engineers, to coax the City Council to sanction the Plan in stages. As the major group in the City Council the Citizens' Association had to assume this invidious responsibility and continuing political embarrassment. Its attitude is indicated by its 1965 Local Body Election manifesto. Policy under the heading of roading began: "The City Council is required by law to have a Master Transportation Plan." Thus the problem of the Master Transportation Plan was not a problem of political choice despite a widely held assumption to the contrary. It was a problem of familiarisation and adjustment in which the City Council cautiously led its

¹ Councillor H. P. Smith

electorate.

Mr. C. B. Millar, currently Director of Planning at the Regional Planning Authority, has said that it is not essential that local body members fully understand the procedure or intentions of a plan but that they must know the consequences of rejecting it.¹ City Council treatment of the Plan does something to demonstrate the truth of this statement. The Council could and did delay decision, and compel modifications in detail, but it could never have rejected the Plan's principal recommendations. The Outline Plan demonstrated a need and proposed a solution. No viable alternative was ever suggested outside the Regional Planning Authority. After the Authority revealed the Plan on 10th September 1962, constituent Councils had little choice but to make the best of it.

The first step towards City Council approval of the Plan was taken on 26th November 1962 when the Council adopted a recommendation of its Town Planning Committee that the Regional Planning Authority should continue with detailed work on the Plan. This implied approval in principle was, however, formally ratified by a special

¹ Address to the Christchurch Civic Trust,
14th December, 1966.

meeting of the City Council on 20th February 196~~2~~³. Mr. Bradshaw, who spoke to the Council on that occasion, made it clear that all the Authority required at that stage was approval in principle. He asked the Council to consider the Plan as a whole and to give its assent to the general concept of the Plan, especially the principle of the motorway system. He argued that details of the Plan, notably the line of the motorway across the Park, were not at issue. However, Mr. Bradshaw did offer some slight reassurance on this point when he commented that the Authority was now considering the possibility of using Harper Avenue as part of the motorway route.¹

Not only was the approval required of the Council very general but the Council was encouraged to give its approval by the City Engineer, Mr. Somers². In his report to the Council Mr. Somers put a restrained but persuasive case for the concept of the Plan. Like Mr. Bradshaw he emphasised that comment would be appropriate on the principles only. Mr. Somers emphasised his long connection with the Plan during its development. Yet

¹ 'Press' 21st February 1963.

² Council consideration of the Plan coincided with the retirement of Mr. Somers and it was suggested to the author that on this sentimental occasion the Plan was approved out of deference to him. This 'explanation' is, however, superfluous.

he maintained a critical independence, suggesting for instance, that if the Park motorway proved unavoidable it might run parallel with both Harper Avenue and Park Terrace so as to avoid actual severance of the Park.

In his defence of the Plan Mr. Somers rejected the suggestion that it was a 'traffic only' plan and he declared that he believed its roading proposals to have been developed in the context of a broad estimate of the City's development. His report recommended motorways as such for reasons of traffic efficiency, safety and economics. On the question of the Fendalton-Avonside motorway the report considered and rejected the Bealey Avenue alternative.¹

The City Council implied its approval when it adopted the City Engineer's report but by merely adopting the report without discussing its principal recommendations the Council plunged passed the fundamentals to the details. Though urged by Mr. Somers to consider the basic concept of the Plan the Council did not do so. Preoccupied with the threat to Hagley Park the Council did not consider the question of whether a system of motorways such as the Plan proposed was appropriate or acceptable. Instead the

¹ City Council Minute Book No. I February - June 1963
p.52112

Council anticipated the problem of the alignment of the Fendalton-Avonside motorway; a problem properly reserved for a later stage. Some Councillors realised that the concession of approval in principle might prejudice their ability to prevent any intrusion on Hagley Park.

Councillor R. M. Macfarlane (Labour) expressed misgivings at the request for approval not because he disapproved the concept of the Plan but because he feared that approval in principle might mean that the Park route would eventually be sanctioned when all possible alternatives were discarded. No Councillor seriously questioned the principle of a system of motorways superimposed on the street system of the City. Yet having once conceded this principle argument about the details was prejudiced by the technical demands of the efficient functioning of the motorway system as a whole.

During the debate a division of emphasis on the principal 'detail', the Fendalton-Avonside motorway, did appear which was later to prove the basis for a party division in the Council. Councillors Macfarlane, Pickering, Armstrong, Denton and Howard (all Labour) and Councillor Skellerup (Citizens') made it clear that they would never sanction any intrusion on the Park.

Councillor Hay was representative of more flexible Council opinion when he indicated that while he greatly preferred that the motorway not infringe the Park, if this should be shown to be unavoidable he would not object to a properly landscaped road.¹

In the main the Council merely adopted the City Engineer's recommendations, putting them in the form of requests to the Regional Planning Authority. It asked the Authority to reconsider the Plan as it affected Hagley Park. This motion was put by Councillor R. M. Macfarlane and accepted without dissent. In addition the Council asked that City Council co-operation be sought when the time came to plan the one-way street system directly associated with the motorways. A detailed economic appraisal of the Plan as it was further developed was also called for. Finally, the Council recommended to the Authority, the report submitted to it by the Study Group.

Nearly fourteen months later on 7th April 1964, the Regional Planning Authority gave notice that the process of ratification might be continued when it adopted the Report on Comments received by the Authority on the

¹ 'Press' 21st February 1963.

the Master Transportation Plan. In a letter dated 17th April the Authority invited the City Council to approve the amended Outline Plan. The Authority had 'softened' the intrusion on Hagley Park as much as possible and now awaited the City Council's response. However, 'final terms' offered by the Authority only minimised the intrusion on the Park and so this objection remained the cornerstone of opposition to the Plan. Nothing less than the complete abandonment of the route across the Park would have satisfied the objectors. This objection also acted as the tangible focus of a whole range of rather vague misgivings about the implications of the Plan for the City. These much wider fears were given a powerful stimulus by the introduction, at the end of May, of the Buchanan Report into the debate. By insisting that the Buchanan Report had rendered the Plan a dated concept the Study Group increased the pressures for a full reconsideration. Yet the preoccupation with the Park route tended to overshadow other issues. Paradoxically, the Hagley Park protest as the heart of popular opposition to the Plan diverted attention from more fundamental complaints against it.

It was with this increasingly confused debate as a

background that City Council consideration of the Plan resumed in mid-1964. From April until the end of November it went on behind closed doors in committee. The process was leisurely, perhaps unnecessarily so. The amended Plan passed in turn from the Town Planning Committee to the Traffic, Reserves, Works and Finance Committees.¹

At a meeting of the Council on 20th May 1964 the Reserves, Traffic, Works and Town Planning Committees reported on their attitude to the amended Plan. No Committee with the possible exception of Traffic was seeking a formula which the full Council could take up to endorse the Plan. The Traffic Committee report accepted the argument for the Park route but qualified its acceptance with a recommendation that the proposal be further investigated. Following the lead of the Town Planning Committee it asked for a special meeting of the Council to discuss the Plan. The Works Committee merely acknowledged that it had studied the amended Plan.

Only one Committee avoided this reluctance to commit itself to an unqualified statement of approval or disapproval. In its report to the Council on 20th May the

¹ It was suggested to the author that the process might have been speeded up if either the Town Planning or Traffic Committees had retained responsibility for Committee consideration and had merely asked other Committees for their opinion on aspects relevant to their fields. Instead, the amended Plan passed from one Committee to another, each defining its interest and responsibility as it saw fit. When it is considered that each Councillor sat on at least two of these Committees the procedure seems particularly futile.

Reserves Committee said that it was still "completely opposed to any intrusion into Hagley Park."^{1, 2}

The Reserves Committee delivered a full report to the Council on the 20th July. It called the Fendalton-Avonside motorway in either of its alternative forms the "most vigorous and determined attempt (to encroach on Hagley Park) ever contemplated in the history of Christchurch."³ The report detailed its estimate of the destruction which the route would cause - the loss of no less than twelve acres of parkland and 200 trees. To avoid this the report suggested the full use of the Belts "even to the expense of say 10% of the scheme."⁴ This suggestion entailed the upgrading of Harper Avenue into a six lane highway and a second bridge at Carlton Mill Corner.

This report was a new and dangerous threat to the Plan. It was a defiant challenge to one aspect but it also endorsed the Study Group's suggestion for the use of the

¹ City Council Minute Book No. I January - June 1964. p.53497

² In 1964 the Reserves Committee was chaired by Councillor P. J. Skellerup probably the best known opponent of the Park route. In addition six of the eight remaining members were opponents of the route or of the Plan as a whole: Councillors R. G. Brown, M. E. McLean, W. E. Olds (Citizens') R. H. Stillwell, H. E. Denton, and M. B. Howard (Labour). Councillors A. Schumacher and W.P. Glue (Citizens') were not known opponents of the Plan.

³ City Council Minute Book No. I July - December 1964. p.54163

⁴ Ibid.

Belts. Most ominously the Reserves Committee report represented the determined opinion of a group from both sides of the Council table. The Committee stated: "We are determined to resist, at all costs, and with all our power, encroachment, for any purpose, by any body of people, on this, the main breathing space in the whole City."¹ The report quoted a remark which it alleged had been made by a senior Regional Planning Authority officer to the Deputy Chairman of the Reserves Committee² at the City Council meeting of 20th February 1963. This officer was quoted as saying: "No matter what you say, what the City Council says or what the public of Christchurch says, the road will go through the Park."³ This provocative statement was now used to justify an equally uncompromising opposition. Such militant opposition was precisely what the Regional Planning Authority could not afford and need never have encouraged. On the whole the Authority understood its task of gentle persuasion and performed it well. It was a serious blunder to provide critics of the Plan with the stimulus of a keen sense of an overbearing opponent. However, it was an isolated incident. In

1. 'Star' 21st July 1964.

2 Councillor W. E. Olds

3 City Council Minute Book No. I July - December 1964, p. 54164. Original underlined.

July 1964 the critical question was whether the Reserves Committee could maintain their determination and unity at the anticipated special meeting of the Council to discuss the amended Plan.

This meeting finally took place on 30th November 1964.¹ At this meeting the unity of the Reserve Committee was broken down by the precarious achievement of unity by the Citizens' majority in the Council. The Plan became 'Government policy' for the first time in the sense that the majority group in the Council were committed to the project as a party. The issue at stake was now a precise one - Council approval for the Plan as distinct from the rather ambiguous request for approval in principle. As members of the 'Government' most Citizens' Councillors were willing to assume the responsibility for securing this approval. The argument for approval was put in the Council by Councillor Guthrey, Chairman of the Works Committee and it was put as 'Government policy'. The days of a non-party formula, supplied by the City Engineer and acceptable to the Council as a whole, were gone.

The conversion of the Master Transportation Plan debate into a party issue in the City Council raises the

¹ Mr. George Manning the Mayor was overseas when the meeting was arranged. Deputy-Mayor, H. P. Smith told the author that he was in no hurry to arrange for such a difficult and politically embarrassing occasion.

problem of giving an account of the formation of party policy. This is especially difficult in the case of the Citizens' Association because members insist it is not a party but an association of individuals. Political party practices are resisted or if practised, go unrecognised or unacknowledged. There is in fact no agreement among Citizens' Councillors on the precise nature of their group. Cheyne reports that two-fifths of Citizens' Councillors claimed that "there were no issues at all on which the group was expected to act as a body."¹ On the other hand Councillor Guthrey, an influential member of the Association, has asserted that the Citizens' Association must respond to the challenge of Labour Party unity with some measure of cohesion of its own.² This conflict between the virtues of independence - on which Citizens' Councillors lay great stress - and the need for unity in order to transact Council business shows no sign of being resolved.

It might be said that the Citizens' Association is an immature, or alternatively, a reluctant party. The operation of the Citizens' caucus prior to the two critical Council debates on the Plan on 30th November

¹ G. Cheyne 'Christchurch - The Men Who Govern.' p.89

² 'Press' 8th October 1965.

and 16th December 1964 offer good illustrations of the confusion and uncertainty which is the product of such a situation. Both parties hold a caucus in the hour preceding Council meetings. The Labour Party is quite frank about this but Citizens' Councillors prefer to argue that their meeting is no caucus at all. Indeed there is some reason to accept this view. Councillor H. P. Smith who chairs the Citizens' caucus does not refer to it as such precisely because of the association of the term with disciplined party politics. The Citizens' caucus, like the Citizens' Association itself, has no clearly defined role. Its prime function, according to Councillor Smith, is to brief Councillors on the recommendations of Council committees of which they are not members. Much of the typical business of a party caucus - the process of debate and bargaining in search of a basis for agreement - is carried on outside caucus. According to former Citizens' Councillor T. D. Flint the practice of "ringing around" is at least as important as the bargaining processes of caucus itself. Furthermore, the effectiveness of a meeting which some Councillors seldom attend, or attend late, must be limited. An additional handicap on the effectiveness of

caucus is the time allowed which at forty minutes must often be inadequate.

Yet despite all these factors limiting the effectiveness of caucus there is a tendency for majority opinion to exert an effective pressure for unity. Councillor Smith calls this pressure "voluntary discipline". Former Councillor T. D. Flint testified to this pressure to achieve unanimity and discipline when he stood as an independent in the 1965 Local Body Elections, giving as his reason, his "inability to speak and act independently at the Council table."¹ Though there is some confusion as to the precise authority of caucus there is a clear minimum assumption on which the Citizens' caucus operates. If a minority cannot be reconciled with the majority then those who intend to express their disagreement in open Council must make their intention known to the caucus.

It was in this ambiguous, and only slightly developed institution that Citizens' Councillors met to attempt to prepare a common front for the special meeting of the Council on 30th November. Councillors Smith and Guthrey brought to caucus a formula for which they hoped to secure

¹ 'Press' 10th August 1965.

general agreement. This draft resolution approved the Plan with the exception of the Park motorway which was to be reserved for City Council design. But it was the way in which this proposal was put which was vital. Not only was the route and design of the motorway through the Park reserved for City Council decision but this was represented by Councillor Guthrey as merely a matter of deciding whether Harper Avenue - which he emphasised already ran through the Park - would remain on its present course or whether it should be re-aligned for shorter access to Park Terrace. This reduction of the Park route issue to such innocuous terms completely undercut the objections of the Reserves Committee report of 20th July. Not surprisingly Councillor Skellerup was not completely satisfied with this verbal manoeuvre of which he was the principal victim.¹ Both he and Councillors Olds and McLean, his fellow Reserves Committee members, went into the Council Chamber having most reluctantly agreed to support the motion. However, one Councillor declared his intention of voting against the motion for another reason. Councillor R. G. Brown told both the caucus and the Council that he could not vote

¹ Councillor Skellerup told the author that this caucus was an "unhappy" meeting.

for approval of the Plan because of his disapproval of the displacement of an estimated 400 residents on the Northern motorway route.^{1, 2}

The formation of Labour Party policy is, in theory at least, more easily set out. Policy is determined by the Christchurch Labour Representation Committee but this formal constitutional statement is to some extent misleading. In the first place the L.R.C. is anxious to avoid creating the impression that it dominates local body members. Secondly, it is argued by some Labour Councillors that they are elected to represent the City not the L.R.C. Some Councillors, absorbed by local body affairs, seldom attend the L.R.C.³ In addition the L.R.C. does not have sufficient time to devote to local body affairs even if it did have ambitions of determining policy. One two-hour meeting a month, much of it devoted to routine business and a wide range of concerns besides City Council affairs simply does not permit a very close supervision of City Council business. Local body

¹ City Council Minute Book No. I July-December 1964. p.54152, p.25

² Former Councillor Brown told the author that he opposed the Plan because he thought that such destruction wrong. Mr. Brown lives in the North Road in the area through which the motorway will pass and he knew that people in the area were disturbed at the prospect. He believes that much of his vote came from his home area. Councillor Brown lost his seat at the October 1965 Local Body Elections.

³ Councillor Denton, when the author interviewed him in January 1967, had not been for nearly two years.

affairs are dealt with piecemeal by the L.R.C. and a plan for regular reports by Labour Councillors to the L.R.C. has yet to be implemented.¹

Since publication of the Plan discussion at the L.R.C. and by the L.R.C. Executive has been frequent but unsystematic. On only one occasion was a meeting arranged by the L.R.C. or its Executive for the purpose of discussing the Plan alone. On 25th February 1966 Labour Councillors met members of the L.R.C. Executive (only four of whom were present) to determine policy on the Plan in the light of Professor Buchanan's report on it. For the rest the Plan was discussed at the L.R.C. as the opportunity offered. On these occasions discussion of the Plan was usually brief and inconclusive. On two occasions (both late 1964) Councillor Denton, as a City Council representative on the Regional Planning Authority, addressed the L.R.C. on the subject of the Plan. Each time he was squeezed in at the end of the evening.

Despite the practical independence of Councillors as a group there has never been any serious division between the L.R.C. on the one hand and the Councillors on the

¹ In mid-1967 there is a possibility that fairly regular, probably bi-monthly, consultation will be implemented.

other. What divisions of opinion there have been have cut across the Labour movement in Christchurch as a whole. According to Councillor N. G. Pickering there have been, broadly speaking, three Labour Party opinions on the Plan. A significant minority never wanted to oppose the Plan. Mayor George Manning was one of these and had to be instructed by the L.R.C., both before and after Professor Buchanan's visit, that he must support the Labour Party's opposition to any infringement of Hagley Park. A second group or opinion focussed its attention on the road through the Park, while a third group in which Councillor Pickering places himself, though concentrating on the Park route for political impact, had broader objections to the Plan. Like the Study Group they had misgivings about the effect of motorways on the City centre. However, an emphasis on opposition to the Park route obscured these differences. Councillor H. E. Denton does not fall into any of these groups but his opposition too, was made ambiguous by his own and his Party's emphasis on the Park route. For a long period a City Council representative on the Regional Planning Authority, he became convinced of the validity of the concept of the Plan. In July 1964 he told a meeting of

the Christchurch Transport Board of which he was a member, that the City would be "a shambles of the worst kind" if the Plan were not implemented.¹ Yet by strenuously opposing any intrusion on the Park he actually helped to delay the project.

It is only in the light of these party processes that the City Council debate on 30th November 1964, can be understood. The political dangers, or alternatively the rewards, of this occasion were emphasised by the presentation of a petition signed by 10,376 persons asking the Council not to approve the Park route. The petition requested that if approval were contemplated the Council should put the issue to the test of a poll. This petition was organised by Mr. E. R. D'Anvers whose Hagley Park Protection League had been formed in July and had subsequently advertised for support in the newspapers. Mr. D'Anvers told the author that the League spent between £200 - £300 on advertising, stationery and other expenses. Mr. D'Anvers was in touch with principal opponents of the Plan, notably Mr. H. G. Royds and Councillor P. J. Skellerup. The latter presented the petition to the Council.²

¹ 'Press' 21st July 1964.

² Mr. D'Anvers who is a retired accountant was Social Credit candidate for Gisborne in 1954.

Councillor Guthrey opened the meeting by putting the resolution for which he had sought prior agreement in caucus. This proposal to approve the Plan while reserving the Park route for Council treatment was seconded by Councillor Hay (Citizens') who expressed the hope that the proposal would prove acceptable to the Council as a whole as a reasonable compromise.

In the course of his ten minute address Councillor Guthrey mentioned the possibility of calling on outside advice but he did not make it clear on precisely what an outside opinion might be needed. Councillor Hay who followed this suggestion up mentioned the name of the former City Engineer of Melbourne who had visited Christchurch in July.¹ In the debate which followed Councillor Skellerup moved an amendment that the Council should immediately resolve to engage "a recognised overseas expert before reaching a decision on the future of road transportation in the City."² Labour Councillors failed to exploit this opportunity and allowed Councillor Guthrey time to speak to Councillor Skellerup and persuaded him to withdraw his amendment, assuring him that if necessary expert advice would be

¹ Mr. L. T. Fraser's comments on the Plan were reported by the 'Press' on 10th July, 1964.

² City Council Minute Book No. 1 July - December 1964. p. 54148, p.28

sought.

This confusion indicates the inadequacy of preparation for the debate in the Citizen's caucus. Councillor Skellerup almost certainly brought the idea up in the caucus but Councillor Guthrey's subsequent ambiguous acknowledgement of it was unsatisfactory to him. The complexity of Councillor Skellerup's own position and therefore the uncertainty of the purpose for which he required an overseas expert contributed to the confusion. Not only was he identified as the foremost opponent of the Park route but he also had doubts about the principle of the Plan. In a letter to the 'Star' on 6th June 1964 he argued against the approach of motorways near city centres. He claimed that motorways were intended only to carry high speed traffic between large centres of population.

The Labour Party rejected Councillor Guthrey's motion outright and in its stead Councillor R.M. Macfarlane proposed that the Council should send the Plan back to the Regional Planning Authority. In addition the Labour Party offered a specially prepared version of the Study Group's 'plan' which the Authority was invited to consider again. Councillor Pickering had on his own

initiative contacted the Study Group and a plan was prepared for this meeting of the Council to enable the Labour Party to complete its opposition role by offering an alternative. In addition, the Group's plan was argued for before the Council by Mr. B. McClelland on behalf of the Study Group. Similarly, Mr. Bradshaw was allowed ten minutes to defend the Authority's Plan. Mr. McClelland put the case for the use of the Belts as a six lane ring road. This alternative he recommended as more up-to-date and less expensive than the Master Transportation Plan. It was also claimed to reconcile the two requirements which the Plan could not - greatly increased traffic flow with the full use of city centre amenities unhampered by traffic. Councillor M.B. Howard told the Council that "they (the Study Group) have got the ideas that the ordinary common people want. They are not fancy planners, they are just ordinary common people."¹

This unlikely alliance of the Labour Party with a group of professional people most of whom were hostile or indifferent to the Labour movement lent a slightly bizarre note to the meeting. The formal opposition of the rival

¹ City Council Minute Book No. I July - December 1964.
p.54152, p.20

plans was itself unreal yet it represented the fulfillment of the Study Group's claim to equal competence in the technical debate. And the impartial and equal treatment accorded Messrs. Bradshaw and McClelland by the Council also helped to maintain the fiction that the Council had a choice.

In the event Councillor Guthrey's motion was accepted by eleven votes to nine, Councillor Brown voting with the opposition. But the idea of engaging a consultant to review the Plan had found another sponsor in Councillor Pickering who now belatedly sought to put an amendment to replace that withdrawn by Councillor Skellerup. However, he was refused permission to do so on procedural grounds by the Chairman, Mr. Manning. He immediately announced his intention of moving such a motion at the next meeting of the Council and subsequently, in a letter to the Town Clerk dated 7th December 1964, he gave notice of his intention of moving a motion asking that the resolution approving the Plan be revoked. Further "... that the City Council should engage the services of a world renowned City Planning consultant to study the Master Transportation Plan in relation the the general planning of the City of Christchurch and suggest

any modifications or alterations with a view to providing for the maximum possible needs of traffic and the welfare of the commercial community while preserving and enhancing good environment."¹ The wording of this motion was the work of Mr. H. G. Royds to whom Councillor Pickering had turned for advice. It was in fact a very brief statement of the interests of the City Planning Study Group and was written with a particular consultant in mind.²

Councillor Pickering's motion represented a new threat to the Plan because it offered the possibility of detaching Councillor Skellerup and at least one or two other Citizens' Councillors from the Council majority. With a copy of Councillor Pickering's motion before them at the caucus of 16th December, Councillors Guthrey and Smith sought a fresh compromise to deal with this threat. Councillor Guthrey's amendment to Councillor Pickering's motion conceded the consultant but it did not revoke the Council's approval of the Plan. Instead it asked the Regional Planning Authority "to take careful note of" the consultant's decision. For the rest Mr. Royds' wording was adopted without change.

Councillor Skellerup subsequently stated that he had

¹ Copy of motion in private collection of documents.

² Professor C. D. Buchanan.

supported Councillor Guthrey's amendment because the consultant must have a plan to consider. Councillor Pickering, on the other hand, argued that the consultant ought not to have his hands tied and be restricted to criticisms of detail.¹ The 'Press' too, considered that since approval for the Plan was retained the consultant's advice would be required chiefly on matters of detail.² Yet the Regional Planning Authority with some justification, considered that the approval given its Plan on 30th November was rescinded on 16th December.³ In fact the consultant could not avoid a judgement on the main proposals of the Plan. Indeed his terms of reference asked him to consider a 'non-motorway' plan, the Study Group proposals. The consultant's essentially political task was a twofold one. He was required by the final authors of his terms of reference to endorse the principle of the motorway system and secondly to settle the disputed question of the route of the Fendalton-Avonside motorway. The consultant's great value to the Council was that he could perform both tasks with supreme technical authority, something which the Council was by definition unable to do.

¹ 'Press' 19th December 1964.

² 'Press' 18th December 1964.

³ Regional Planning Authority 'Report on the Master Transportation Plan'. September 1966.

Professor Buchanan Decides the Issue

The idea of employing a consultant to settle a technical issue for the City Council was not a new one. At the time the debate on the Plan opened the City Council resolved a similar controversy by accepting the advice of an overseas consultant. Almost exactly one month after the Plan was revealed in September 1962 a report was delivered to the City Council by Professor W. G. Stephenson¹ which finally settled a long-standing dispute on the question of a site for a Town Hall. In May 1961 the City Council had adopted this expedient as the only possible way of achieving a decision. At that time the dispute was deadlocked for want of an authoritative opinion to make out a convincing case for one or other of two sites.

This precedent was in fact mentioned from the beginning of the Master Transportation Plan dispute as a method of settling the issue. In their first press statement, Messrs. Beaven and Royds and Dr. P. S. Cook referred to the success of Professor Stephenson's visit and implied that the expedient might well be repeated in the case of the Master Transportation Plan.² Opponents

1. Professor Stephenson held the Chair of Town Planning at the University of Western Australia.

2. 'Press' 9th November 1962.

of the Plan also took comfort from the fact that Prof. Stephenson had decided against the Regional Planning Authority's first choice for a Town Hall site.¹ In mid-1964 when both parties to the dispute scoured the Buchanan Report for material to support their cases, City Councillor R. G. Stillwell (Labour) suggested in a letter to the 'Press' that Professor Buchanan should be engaged by the Council.²

When Councillor Skellerup moved his amendment for an overseas consultant, at the 30th November meeting of the Council, he had Professor Buchanan in mind. He had been in touch with Study Group members for some time and reflected their preference for Professor Buchanan. That portion of Councillor Pickering's motion drafted by Mr. Royds which was incorporated in Councillor Guthrey's amendment, was intended as an invitation to Professor Buchanan to apply his method (as set out in 'Traffic in Towns') to the Master Transportation Plan. The City Planning Study Group greatly preferred Professor Buchanan though failing him they mentioned as possibilities Professor Stephenson and Professor Ling of Coventry. It is hardly surprising then that when, during the

¹ This was pointed out by a correspondent in the 'Press', 28th February 1963.

² 'Press', 18th July 1964.

Christmas - New Year recess 1964-65, the City Council Town Planning Committee assumed the responsibility of finding a consultant acceptable to the Council, that Professor Buchanan was their first choice with Professors Stephenson and Ling as reserves. On 11th February 1965 the 'Press' reported that Professor Buchanan had been approached and had indicated his willingness to accept the assignment and that the City Council had, therefore, decided to invite him.

Initially, however, Professor Buchanan was uncertain as to precisely what he was required to give his advice on. In the first place his terms of reference, which virtually invited the application of the principles of 'Traffic in Towns' to the Christchurch situation, were rather ambiguous considering that approval for the Plan was retained. This wording was of course originally coupled with the setting aside of the Plan. In Councillor Pickering's motion it was intended that the consultant take a fresh look at the problem of traffic in Christchurch. Even if this ambiguity is ignored, the key instruction to the consultant "to study the Master Transportation Plan in relation to the general planning of

the City" was very wide. Consequently, Professor Buchanan had to be informed of the precise nature of the political problems of the Council by letter, and more fully when he arrived.

Not only had the Council to make it clear what it required of its consultant but it had also to prepare to make effective use of his advice. Professor Buchanan was the expert beyond whom there was no appeal and the City Council was eager to commit itself in advance to accepting his advice. For Councillor Skellerup in particular, Professor Buchanan represented the means of salvation from a very difficult position and when his acceptance was announced Councillor Skellerup promptly stated that he would accept Professor Buchanan's decision and that he hoped other Councillors would do the same.¹ The Council as a whole was eager to reinforce Professor Buchanan's authority by virtually abdicating its own in his favour. His great professional authority was emphasised by his sponsors to justify their commitment to accepting his decision. When he announced Professor Buchanan's acceptance, Councillor G. D. Griffiths, Chairman of the Town Planning Committee, said that he was

¹ 'Press', 11th February 1965.

"the leading consultant of the British Commonwealth in the subject".¹ The parallel with the Town Hall case is very close. When the engagement of a consultant was announced the Town Hall Committee issued a statement saying that "the Council, as the elected government of the City, should make a strong appeal to all citizens to put from their minds all their previously held opinions and accept and act upon the advice of a man whose knowledge and experience could provide for Christchurch a plan which would command the admiration of those who followed".²

Professor Buchanan and his partner were at first expected at the end of September 1965 but their arrival was postponed to the New Year. While they were awaited debate was virtually suspended and the Plan was not a significant issue at the 1965 Local Body Elections.³ Nevertheless on the eve of the poll the 'Press' found it necessary to chide "some short-sighted candidates" for attempting to exploit opposition to encroachment on the Park.⁴ Councillor Pickering sought a means to tap this opposition when he canvassed the idea in Labour Party circles, of a poll to coincide with the elections to test

¹ 'Press', 11th February 1965.

² 'Press', 18th May 1961.

³ It was suggested to the author that the Citizens' Councillors handling the negotiations encouraged Professor Buchanan to delay till after the Elections.

⁴ 'Press', 8th October 1965.

public opinion on the question. However, he gained little support and the suggestion lapsed.

In their manifesto the Labour Party merely promised a review "of the Master Transportation Plan with particular reference to its effects on Hagley Park and the interest of residents who would be affected by the Plan." The Citizens' Association manifesto promised that Citizens' Councillors would accept Professor Buchanan's advice while at the same time it recorded their "determination to preserve our treasured heritage of Hagley Park where road widening or deviation must be kept to an absolute minimum." Councillor H. P. Smith, in a prepared statement, boldly acknowledged that traffic engineering in the next ten to fifteen years would become an increasing burden on Council income.¹

Professor Buchanan arrived in Christchurch at the beginning of January 1966 to find himself at the centre of a complex and demanding political situation. On the one hand, as the City Council's consultant, he was obliged to do his best to find solutions to the political difficulties of his sponsor. On the other, he was reminded of his strictly professional obligation by the Study Group who

¹ 'Press', 7th October 1965.

had high hopes that he would critically apply his theoretical schemes to the Plan. His role as arbiter of the City's fate is highlighted by the request of a group making representations to him, that they be granted a private and confidential hearing. The reason given for this request was that the group wished to have the same opportunity as all other interested parties to put its case.¹

Professor Buchanan discussed the Plan with Mr. C. B. Millar and Mr. Malcolm Douglass of the Regional Planning Authority and it seems likely that the Authority supplied him with more documentary and statistical information than he and his partner had time to consider. However, the only member of the team which produced the Plan, seen by Professor Buchanan, was Miss Northcroft with whom he discussed the issues on the evening before he reported to the Council and when his 'Review' was largely written. He did, of course, see members of the Study Group whose alternative proposals he was required to consider.

When he took his findings to the City Council on 14th January, Professor Buchanan said that his had been a

¹ Mr. Scoular the City Engineer reports this incident in his Comment on Professor Buchanan's 'Planning in Christchurch: A Review'. Colin Buchanan and Partners London January 1966. City Council Minutes 1966, p.55260

"difficult and to some extent invidious task".¹ He was referring to the great authority the City Council had sought to invest him with, an authority which, he said, he had was reluctant to accept. He had no wish, he said, to be "put on a pedestal".² Rather than hand down a decision as he had been encouraged to do, he preferred to state the facts and let the Council decide. Yet the circumstances of the case and the nature of the problems at issue did not permit this. As the Council had intended, the specific problems on which it required decisions were "settled on technical traffic grounds".³

However, in his 'Review' of the Plan, the consultant dealt with these problems on which the Council required a decision only after a broader discussion of the Plan. His method was to set out in general terms the City's anticipated transportation problem and then to give an account of the principles which he believed must guide and discipline any solution. In other words he merely applied the principles which were set out in Chapter II of 'Traffic in Towns' to Christchurch. This of course was what his 'ghost' sponsors, the Study Group, required him to do. Predictably, therefore, the results of this exercise

¹ From his address to the City Council on 14th January 1966. Cyclostyled material private collection.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

"delighted" Messrs. Beaven, Royds and Montgomery.

Professor Buchanan's basic criticism of the Plan was that it proposed a road network for Christchurch in 1980 without having a sufficiently clear picture of what form the City will have taken by that time. Such a plan for traffic movement over the long term, he argued, cannot have any reliable predictive power if it is not prepared as an integral part of a town plan. Professor Buchanan found inadequate - though he did not say so quite so bluntly - material collected towards a town plan. In fact he could locate no "Regional Planning Scheme", only some elements of such a scheme - local body zoning proposals, an urban fence map, a plan for manufacturing and the Master Transportation Plan itself.¹

One of the results of the development of a comprehensive town plan would be the delineation of environmental areas. Since he could find no such plan he made it clear that he believed that the relationship of the primary road system of the Master Transportation Plan with the areas they served must be a highly suspect one.

¹ When he wrote his 'Review' Professor Buchanan's knowledge of background work done by the Regional Planning Authority was incomplete. He was apparently not aware of the existence of confidential land use studies done by the Authority. Neither was he fully informed on more recent environmental area studies done by both the City Council and the Authority. This latter point was made by Mr. Scoular in his Comment on the 'Review'. City Council Minutes 1966, p.55260, p.2

The primary road system in Professor Buchanan's phrase must be "bent on" to the environmental areas and the capacity of the network must be appropriate to the capacity of the environmental areas. Neither of these objectives could be achieved, except by good fortune, when the method of the Plan in establishing a road network was not to first establish the environmental areas but was merely "to compare future forecasted traffic volumes with existing street capacities and then where serious overloading occurs to consider ways and means of increasing street capacity either by widening or inserting a new road."¹ The consultant's conclusion was that "the method by which these motorways have been arrived at, however, is a far cry from the systematic study of network and environmental area questions over the whole of the urban area which we would wish to have seen undertaken."²

The 'Review' distinguishes two "vitally important"³ central environmental areas (the central shopping area and the 'island' between Hagley Park and the Avon River) which, it points out, the Master Transportation Plan does not clearly define. The 'Review' offers an

1 'Review' p.34

2 Ibid p.35

3 'Ibid' ~~1985~~

alternative sketch plan showing how these two areas could be serviced, correcting a tendency found in the Plan "to desire to use the maximum possible amount of road space for traffic purposes irrespective of environmental considerations."¹ It is also argued in the 'Review' that the proposed bridge linking Antigua Street and Rolleston Avenue should be deleted from the Plan because it would introduce extraneous traffic into that environmental area. This revision is an application of Professor Buchanan's principle that all the main approaches to the central area should be from the East.

It might be thought that this severe criticism of the method of the Plan would have finally discredited it. ~~This~~ was not the case for though Professor Buchanan was critical of the method of the Plan he approved its main proposals. In general he found "the transportation study to be reliable as far as the case for the central motorways is concerned."² Elsewhere in the 'Review' he revealed how it was possible to at once criticise the method of the Plan and yet approve its proposals when he said that "the possibilities for network location in the vicinity of the ~~central~~ area

1 'Review' p.44

2 ~~Ibid~~ p.54

are necessarily limited. It may well be that even the full network study we have advocated would produce proposals not vastly dissimilar to those which have been evolved in the shape of the motorway proposals of the Transportation Plan."¹

Not only did he approve the motorway system but he also endorsed the need for, and siting of, the Fendalton-Avonside motorway though he noted that "the 1980 traffic figures are only just sufficient to justify a road of motorway standards."² Having conceded the need, he detailed but rejected a scheme to use Bealey Avenue instead. He found the official solution "better and 'cleaner' than the somewhat 'squeezed in' proposition for Bealey Avenue."³

This conclusion was for the purposes of political decision the most important finding of the 'Review'. Professor Buchanan's approval for the motorway system, and for the Fendalton-Avonside motorway in particular, provided his formal sponsors - the City Council Citizens' majority - with the authoritative opinion they required. This rather negative approval settled the 'low' argument about the Plan for it was the basis

¹ Ibid p.36

² Ibid p.40

³ Ibid p.42

on which the majority group in the Council was finally able to act as a united party. At the same time the 'Review', as an authoritative critique of the method and implications of the Plan, was the culmination of the 'high' argument about the Plan. It was Professor Buchanan's masterly achievement to satisfy both his formal and his informal sponsors.

The 'Star' reported a "storm of reaction" to news of Professor Buchanan's approval of the route of the Fendalton-Avonside motorway.¹ Councillor Skellerup was reported as preferring that all the trees in Bealey Avenue should be sacrificed than that the Park should be violated. At the same time he was prepared to honour his pledge to follow Professor Buchanan's advice in which case the intrusion should be as slight as possible. Mr. E. R. D'Anvers, organiser of the major 1964 petition, offered to organise another with a target of 100,000 signatures.²

This narrow reaction to the 'Review', a reissue of the protest which greeted the Plan in September 1962, was confirmed at a meeting of the City Council on 21st February, 1966. The debate was confined almost

¹ 'Star' 15th January 1966.

² Ibid.

entirely to the subject of the Fendalton-Avenside motorway. Citizens' Councillors stressed that the route had been approved by a consultant whose opinion could not be surpassed. For the Labour side, Councillor Pickering called for the further investigation of the Bealey Avenue alternative narrowly rejected by Professor Buchanan. On a clearcut party division the meeting adopted the City Development Committee's recommendation that the Plan be approved subject to "the Harper Avenue link to the Carlton Mill Bridge being deleted and the Antigua Street bridge proposal being omitted until the Council had determined a central city network based on an environmental area study."^{1, 2.}

Professor Buchanan's 'Review' was not discussed. Councillor Guthrey merely stated, when introducing his Committee's recommendation, that "we are prepared to support the Professor's report entirely."³ Final approval for the Plan, following a debate with no more than a passing reference to Professor Buchanan's concern for the securing of arrangements to make the motorway system the servant and not the curse of the

¹ 'Press' 22nd March 1966.

² Subsequently at a meeting of the Regional Planning Authority Councillor W.P. Glue contested (perhaps ironically) Mr. Bradshaw's assumption of City Council approval for the Plan. He pointed out that the Council had yet to discuss the Northern and Southern motorways. 'Press' 4th May 1966.

³ 'Press' 22nd March 1966.

City, was the ultimate distortion of the Master Transportation Plan dispute. This opportunity to debate the crucial issues which the Plan implied for the City was declined. The Council had merely approved a roading Plan, the serious implications of which it seemed hardly aware.

The Question of Public Opinion

The debate about the Master Transportation Plan was conditioned by assumptions about the affect of proposals on public opinion, yet at no time did anybody concerned have any idea of the real dimensions of public opinion. This study would not be complete without some attempt to answer this question.

Early in April 1966 a postal questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 350 people whose names were taken at regular intervals from the Christchurch City District Electors' Roll (1965). A final return of 297 (or 85%) was achieved by calling on a sample of the 60 odd who had failed to reply. In most of these cases the questionnaire had not reached the person to whom it was addressed.

The questionnaire contained ten questions plus a final section to establish the age, length of residence and education of the sample. It should be noted at the outset that the 21-29 age group was under-represented in the sample.

Table 1
Age Group

21 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 64	65+	Total
9% (30)	18% (53)	27% (79)	28% (82)	18% (53)	100%(297)

Questioned on their attitude to the Plan as a whole, over half (55%) said that they were "moderately interested", while 30% said that they were "very interested". Of the remainder, 11% were "slightly interested" and 3% "not at all". Responses to this question were compared with responses to a question which asked how often they had followed newspaper reports on the Plan. As might be expected, there was a high correlation between "very interested" and regular reading of newspaper reports.

Table 2

Reading of newspaper reports on the Plan
compared with degree of interest

<u>Interest:</u>	<u>Reports read:</u>		
	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Regularly</u>
Not at all	33% (4)	3% (5)	
Slightly	25% (3)	19% (32)	
Moderately	42% (5)	67% (114)	37% (42)
Very		11% (18)	63% (70)
Total	100% (12)	100% (169)	100% (112)

A comparison of interest with age reveals a marked difference between the youngest (21 - 29) and the oldest (65 and over). Whereas 80% of ^{the} 21 - 29 group were only "moderately interested", only 33% of the 65 and over group were only "moderately interested" while nearly half (48%) of this group were "very interested."

Table 3

Degree of Interest compared with Age

<u>Interest:</u>	<u>21 - 29</u>	<u>30 - 39</u>	<u>40 - 49</u>	<u>50 - 64</u>	<u>65 and over</u>
Not at all		2%(1)	5%(4)	2%(2)	5%(3)
Slightly	13%(4)	11%(6)	13%(10)	7%(6)	14%(8)
Moderately	80%(24)	62%(32)	56%(43)	59%(48)	33%(19)
Very	7%(2)	25%(13)	26%(20)	32%(26)	48%(27)
Total	100%(30)	100%(52)	100%(77)	100%(82)	100%(57)

Those with the longest formal education were only slightly more interested than those who left school at or before the age of 14.

Table 4

Degree of Interest compared with Education

<u>Interest:</u>	<u>Age left School:</u>			
	<u>Up to 14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17 and over</u>
Not at all	6% (5)	1% (1)	1% (1)	1% (1)
Slightly	8% (6)	15% (11)	13% (9)	5% (4)
Moderately	57% (44)	51% (38)	60% (44)	56% (40)
Very	29% (22)	33% (24)	26% (19)	38% (27)
Total	100% (77)	100% (74)	100% (73)	100% (72)

To elicit the sample's attitude to planning, a series of alternatives were offered in the questionnaire. 66% favoured the statement: "We should plan now to meet the traffic needs of the 1980's;" while 17% thought that "We shouldn't rush into anything but should make changes gradually". A further 11% chose the statement: "we should let the problems develop to be sure what they are

before we try to tackle them" and 6% did not nominate a preference. A comparison of these preferences with formal education revealed a greater preference for the statement: "We should plan now to meet the traffic needs of the 1980's" among the two groups longest at school.

Table 5

Comparison of attitude to planning, with education.

	<u>up to 14</u>	<u>at 15</u>	<u>at 16</u>	<u>17 or later</u>
We should plan now to meet the traffic needs of the 1980's	63%(42)	69%(49)	81%(57)	76%(53)
We shouldn't rush into anything but should make changes gradually	18%(12)	20%(14)	10%(7)	16%(11)
We should let the problems develop to be sure what they are before we try to tackle them	19%(13)	11%(8)	9%(6)	8%(6)
Total	100%(67)	100%(71)	100%(70)	100%(70)

In correspondence on the Plan in the two newspapers in 1962-63, and again in the second half of 1964, there were frequent derogatory references to the 'planners' who were often characterised as a sub-species of the 'faceless bureaucrat' stereotype. The most virulent expression of this opinion appeared in the correspondence

columns of the 'Star' on 7th May 1964. This correspondent wrote: "Whenever I hear the word planner, I know that democracy is in danger. These planners are little men and can never, absolutely never, be relied upon to produce the right answer and yet their name is legion. They proliferate like lice. (They are) ... the Twentieth Century insect." The most common accusation made against the 'planners' was that they were narrow specialists. A correspondent in the 'Press' on 22nd February 1963 charged that "humanitarian, cultural and aesthetic" values had been ignored in the preparation of the Plan. A similar point was made by a correspondent who said: "Transportation planners are not primarily concerned with values other than traffic ones."¹ Related to the charges of insensitivity and narrow professionalism was the suggestion that it was because some of these specialists were "not born and bred in Christchurch"² that plans for the intrusion on Hagley Park were produced. Any native specialist, it was implied, would have known better. Apart from these recurring themes the planning officers were accused, among other things, of being untrustworthy,³ and of "being where the overseas planners were 30 years ago."⁴

¹ 'Press' 18th July 1964.

² Letter in the 'Star' 9th July 1964.

³ 'Star' 31st October 1964.

⁴ 'Star' 30th November 1964.

On the question of the discretion to be allowed experts such as town planners and traffic engineers, another series of alternatives were offered in the questionnaire. Only 29% thought that "we should trust the experts who are trained to know what is necessary." Nearly half (45%) thought that they might be trusted "in general but checked when they go too far", while 25% thought that "the wishes of the public should be followed." A comparison of education with attitudes to this question revealed a significant difference. Whereas 31% of those who left school up to 14 thought that "the wishes of the public should be followed" only 12% of those who left school at 17 or later did so.

Table 6

Comparison of attitude to discretion
to be allowed experts, with education.

	<u>Age left School</u>			
	<u>up to 14</u>	<u>at 15</u>	<u>at 16</u>	<u>17 or later</u>
We should trust the experts who are trained to know what is necessary	25%(19)	31%(21)	39%(28)	29%(19)
We should trust the experts in general but check them when they go too far	41%(31)	38%(26)	42%(30)	59%(39)
The wishes of the public should be followed	31%(23)	31%(21)	19%(14)	12%(8)
Don't know	3%(2)			
Total	100%(75)	100%(68)	100%(72)	100%(66)

The questionnaire revealed a large measure of disapproval for the City Council's decision to employ a 'super-planner'. Exactly 50% of the sample disagreed with the decision to bring Professor Buchanan out from England to comment on the Plan. Only 36% agreed, while 11% had no opinion, and 3% did not know. Some respondents 'wrote in' their grounds for disagreement. Eight insisted that New Zealand experts were adequate, or indeed preferable, since they were familiar with local conditions. Six protested that Professor Buchanan's fee was an unnecessary expense, including one respondent who said that it was "a complete waste of public money" and that Professor Buchanan "wants throwing over board before arrival". A further three respondents said that Professor Buchanan's engagement was both inappropriate and unnecessarily expensive.

On the question of Professor Buchanan's engagement a striking difference between educational groups emerged. Whereas only 19% of those who left school at or before age 14 agreed with the decision to engage Professor Buchanan, 64% of those who left school at 17 or later did agree.

Table 7

Attitude to Professor Buchanan's engagement
compared with education.

	<u>Age left School</u>		<u>At 16</u>	<u>17 or later</u>
	<u>Up to 14</u>	<u>At 15</u>		
Agree	19% (14)	21% (16)	38% (28)	64% (45)
Disagree	65% (48)	62% (47)	47% (34)	28% (20)
No opinion	12% (9)	16% (12)	11% (8)	1% (1)
Don't know	4% (3)	1% (1)	4% (3)	1% (1)
Total	100% (74)	100% (76)	100% (73)	100% (71)

Professor Buchanan's engagement was disagreed with by only 33% of the 21 - 29 age group but 63% of the 65 and over group disagreed. This difference is explained in part by the fact that the younger group tend to be better educated.

Table 8

Attitude to Professor Buchanan's engagement compared with age.

	<u>21 - 29</u>	<u>30 - 39</u>	<u>40 - 49</u>	<u>50 - 64</u>	<u>65+</u>
Agree	57%(17)	40%(21)	30%(23)	37%(31)	24%(13)
Disagree	33%(10)	49%(26)	50%(38)	51%(42)	63%(34)
No Opinion	10%(3)	9%(5)	15%(11)	11%(9)	9%(5)
Don't know		2%(1)	5%(4)	1%(1)	4%(2)
Total	100%(30)	100%(53)	100%(76)	100%(83)	100%(54)

Respondents were asked if the Plan affected them in any way. As proportions of the total number of responses to the alternatives, 18% (72) said they were not affected at all while 3% (12) did not know. As many as 167 (43% of all responses) considered themselves affected as motorists, 31% (113) as rate payers and 7% (28) as property owners.

Asked for their view on the Park motorway and presented with a series of alternatives, 45% (147) indicated that the Park would not be harmed while 20% (67) thought that the alternatives were "either impractical or too expensive so we must reluctantly accept it." A further 17% (57)

thought that "We should continue to search for an alternative" and 16% (53) thought that "the Park should not be touched in any circumstances."

On the key question of approval for the amended Park route 45% (134) "approved" while a further 19% (56) "approved reluctantly". These two categories taken together make up 64% (190) of the entire sample. Only 26% (78) "disapproved" and 6% (19) "disapproved mildly", which taken together total 32% (97) of the sample. The categories of "don't know" and "have no opinion" accounted for 2% (8) each.

When "interest" was compared with "approval" and "disapproval" a significant difference was revealed. Whereas 33% of those who "approved" were "very interested", close to half (46%) of those who "disapproved" were very interested.

Table 9

Attitude to the Park route compared with degree of interest.

	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Slightly</u>	<u>Moderately</u>	<u>Very</u>
Approve	40%(2)	57%(17)	51%(84)	39%(33)
Approve reluctantly		10%(3)	25%(40)	14%(12)
Disapprove mildly		20%(6)	6%(10)	1%(1)
Disapprove	60%(3)	13%(4)	18%(29)	46%(39)
Total	100%(5)	100%(30)	100%(163)	100%(85)

A comparison of attitude to the Park route with age revealed a clear distinction between the 65 and over group and all other groups. The difference was most marked between the youngest and oldest group for whereas 10% of the 21 - 29 group "disapproved" the Park route, 42% of the 65 and over group "disapproved".

Table 10

Attitude to the Park route compared with age.

	<u>21 - 29</u>	<u>30 - 39</u>	<u>40 - 49</u>	<u>50 - 64</u>	<u>65 +</u>
Approve	48%(14)	53%(27)	46%(33)	49%(39)	30%(15)
Approve reluctantly	35%(10)	12%(6)	27%(19)	16%(13)	16%(8)
Disapprove mildly	9%(2)	2%(1)	6%(4)	5%(4)	12%(6)
Disapprove	10%(3)	33%(17)	21%(15)	30%(24)	42%(21)
Total	100%(29)	100%(52)	100%(71)	100%(80)	100%(50)

No significant differences between the four educational groups in their attitudes to the Park route were revealed.

Table 11

Attitude to the Park route compared with education.

<u>Age left School:</u>	<u>Up to 14</u>	<u>at 15</u>	<u>at 16</u>
Approve	41%(29)	49%(35)	61%(44)
Approve reluctantly	19%(13)	16%(11)	11%(8)
Disapprove mildly	13%(9)	4%(3)	7%(5)
Disapprove	27%(19)	31%(22)	21%(15)
Total	100%(70)	100%(71)	100%(72)

A comparison of length of residence in Christchurch with attitude to the Park route, not surprisingly revealed the largest measure of disapproval among those who had spent their whole life in the City.

Table 12

Attitude to the Park route compared
with length of residence in Christchurch.

	<u>Whole Life</u>	<u>Over 10 years</u>	<u>less than 10 years</u>
Approve	46% (60)	40% (44)	65% (20)
Approve reluctantly	18% (24)	26% (29)	13% (4)
Disapprove mildly	8% (11)	8% (9)	6% (2)
Disapprove	28% (37)	27% (30)	16% (5)
Total	100% (132)	100% (112)	100% (31)

It was thought that those respondents with a car in the household would be less likely to disapprove the Park route. This proved to be the case but only margin

Table 13

Attitude to the Park route compared
with car ownership.

	<u>Car</u>	<u>No</u>
Approve	48% (113)	38%
Approve reluctantly	20% (47)	19%
Disapprove mildly	6% (13)	10%
Disapprove	26% (61)	33%
Total	100% (234)	100%

Finally, the distribution of attitudes on the Park route were related to newspaper readership. It might have been expected that since the 'Press' maintained a favourable attitude to the Plan that 'Press' readers might have approved the Park route more readily than 'Star' readers. This proved not to be the case.

Table 14

Choice of newspaper compared
with attitude to the Park route

	<u>Press</u>	<u>Star</u>	<u>Both</u>
Approve	36%(22)	48%(55)	52%(56)
Approve reluctantly	28%(17)	18%(21)	16%(17)
Disapprove mildly	5%(3)	8%(9)	6%(6)
Disapprove	31%(19)	26%(30)	26%(28)
Total	100%(61)	100%(115)	100%(107)

Conclusion

The short conclusion to be drawn from this study of the politics of urban planning is that the processes of planning automatically exclude the possibility of significant political choice. The real choices are made by the planners on professional or technical grounds. The role of the local body member is not to decide for or against a plan but merely to endorse it. However, this account of their respective functions cannot be admitted by either the planner or the politician. Both are committed to the pretence that the political body must choose between real alternatives. Yet though there may be no choice the planner must still convince both the public and his political masters of the validity of the plan so that they will freely endorse it. He will concede that in theory his plan may be rejected but in practice he knows that it must be accepted. This formal concession is vitally important to the politician who cannot admit that the responsibility for political choice has been effectively taken out of his hands. In this way the incompatibility between the planning and the doctrine of political choice is necessarily blurred, often to such an extent that the politician long

continues to believe that he retains the ability to choose

When the Master Transportation Plan was prepared in outline form, it presented an immediate problem for its originators and a potential problem for the political body to which it would pass. First, there was the Regional Planning Authority's problem of presenting its Plan. Second, there was the City Council's potential problem of coming to grips with the unpalatable fact that its freedom to choose was confined to matters of detail. On the success with which the Regional Planning Authority solved ^{the first} ~~the~~ problem largely depended the City Council's reaction to its problem.

In 1962 when the Plan had only just reached the outline stage the Authority committed it, at short notice, to the test of open public discussion. The Authority is hardly to be blamed for this apparent blunder for it was compelled to publish by the demands of the political system in which it operated. The Authority was forced to publish because it could not plan in isolation from the political community to which it was responsible. In fact the Authority itself has two aspects - a professional planning and a political aspect. The work of the Authority's professional officers is under the constant

scrutiny of the representatives of the constituent Councils whose task it is to consider the political implications of that work. Yet there seems to be an unresolvable conflict between the demand of the planner to pursue his work with the minimum of outside interference and the demands of a democratic society for knowledge of that process. Town planning and allied activities are professional - technical activities, each operating within the terms of its own professional discipline. Their practitioners tend to demand to be allowed to take their enquiries unhindered through their various stages until definitive conclusions are reached. Only then, they argue, may their work be published. Since this demand is unlikely to be met the planner must seek means of minimising the unwelcome effects of the conflict which accompanies the open development of his plans. He can attempt, if he has the resources and skills necessary, to 'stage manage' the whole process of public discussion by guiding the public towards choices of which he approves. This of course involves a sophisticated public information campaign.

The Regional Planning Authority in 1962 did not seem to be aware of the conflict between its need to be left

alone to define its solution and the demand from outside for knowledge of that process. In mid-1962 the Authority was preparing to reveal its Outline Plan not to the public but to local bodies in closed session. This intention was in fact founded on an untenable distinction between the public and their political representatives. Clearly, it was unreasonable to ask local body members to take decisions in advance of any public knowledge of the issues. Yet at first glance it seems an intelligent tactic. The Authority intended to abstract the local bodies from their political environment and in this more flexible situation have them consider the Outline Plan in two parts. The intention was to ask for the endorsement of the form of the motorway system, but only after setting aside politically sensitive aspects of that system. the subject of these specific difficulties, and the for a motorway from Fendalton Road to Park Terrace. In particular, the Authority was prepared to discuss alternatives.

But at the same time (late 1961 early 1962) the Authority provoked the demand for publication of the Outline by approaching the other half of its political equation - the public - not with the solution but with

the problem alone. By seeking to convince the public of the problem in preparation for their eventual reception of the solution, the Authority actually precipitated a demand for immediate publication of the solution. When compelled to publish the Authority found itself faced with a situation for which it was completely unprepared and could not control. It could not maintain its distinction between principles, or main proposals, and the details of these proposals. The Outline Plan appeared to most of the interested public, to make a firm proposal for a road across North Hagley Park. Because it was never able to correct this impression and put in its place the idea of the 'need for a motorway in the vicinity', the Authority saw its plan unnecessarily delayed by the Hagley Park protest.

It only remains to consider why the City Council for so long to appreciate the significance of the process which produced the Outline Plan; a process which has the effect of abolishing the Council's prerogative of significant political choice. The origin of the Council's failure can be traced to the earlier failure of the Regional Planning Authority to deal adequately with its problem of the presentation of the Outline Plan. Not only did the

Outline Plan fail to distinguish clearly between concept and detail but it also neglected to give some account of how the motorway system had been evolved in such a way as to make it clear that this system represented the definitive solution to the problem. Consequently, at the same time as the Authority failed to demonstrate the necessity of its concept it seemed to make a highly objectionable proposal. The combination of these two circumstances obscured the proper course of the City Council. It was not clear that the Plan could not be rejected and there seemed very good reason to reject it. Eventually, however, it became obvious to the majority party in the Council - who could hardly escape the responsibility - that approval for the Plan could not be withheld indefinitely. By making the distinction between concept and detail Councillors Guthrey and Smith were able to unite the Citizens' Association (with one exception) on 30th November 1964 in support of the Plan. The Labour Party, on the other hand, sustained the pretence to the very end that the City Council could equally well choose not to endorse the Plan. Had the Labour Party been in a majority in the Council it is difficult to see how it could have maintained such a

position. The Plan demanded, and must have got, the endorsement of the City Council no matter what its composition.

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